

Gate of Revelation

(天启之门)

Chapter

001-209

Dancing

(跳舞)

Story Description:

In life, we attend school, find love, work, buy a house, pay our housing loans, insert weird faces in WeChat, watch movies... do any of you find anything amiss? One day, a group of strange people entered this world, equipped in strange clothing and possessing extraordinary powers, cold-blooded killers! They call themselves [Players].

Wait! Wait! You people want to kill me? You say I am NPC (Non Playable Character)? Stop joking around! You crazy bastards! I will fight you to the death! I will survive!

NPC beating up Players! Original residents beating up Transmigrants!

My world, my rules! What makes you think you bastards can come over and boss us around?

Threading the path of the strongest saviour in history, one destined to be filled with excitement!

Chen Xiaolian: From today onwards, an organization whose sole purpose is to oppose those bastards is established! Our guild shall be named... Player Thwarting Alliance!

Guild Member: Leader, this name, if we are to say it out, I fear we will be beaten up...

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: Come Forward and Receive Death

“Come forward and receive death!”

“I do not have many friends, you are one. If you die, I will be unhappy.”

...

After adjusting some final punctuation with his keyboard, Chen Xiaolian raised his head and massaged his sore temple.

Within a VIP waiting room of an airport, service personnel wearing beautiful uniform were gently pouring coffee for the guests.

This is an airport within a small country's tourist city, located within Southeast Asia.

Chen Xiaolian stretched his waist and quickly affixed an author's back section on the chapter that he had just finished. Thinking for a moment, he quickly typed in a line of text: Seeking monthly ticket...

Glancing at the book review section, he could see some readers urging for more while others were cursing: Always not updating the book, but still have the face to ask for monthly ticket, author has a small dick ah...

He quickly exited the back section, switched off his laptop, and stuffed it into his bag. Suddenly getting the urge to urinate, he looked at his phone and saw that it was still early. Chen Xiaolian immediately got up while carrying his bag and proceeded to run towards the toilet.

Chen Xiaolian, gender male.

As for his profession... a web novelist, one who writes fantasy fiction novels. He has quite the reputation within the web novel circle as he had written one or two relatively popular web novels.

He also managed to earn some royalties.

Hmm, considering his current age, there was no need to spend much money anyways. As for things like getting married, having children and

buying a house, those matters are something that is relatively far in the future for him.

However, in his online profile, he had made up a rather funny image of himself. It was something of a prank towards his readers. He casually took an image shared by his circle of friends and made it his own avatar picture: It is the picture of a thirty-year-old fair skinned fatty with a round looking face.

Because of this, his readers and fan base all thought Chen Xiaolian to be an adorable thirty-year-old fatty. Fans who were close to him would affectionately call him “bloody fatty” or “fat uncle”.

However, the truth...

...

Hua!

Chen Xiaolian splashed a handful of cold water onto his face before roughly wiping at it. He then observed the reflection on the mirror. A noticeably immature looking face that was overly delicate looked back. Chen Xiaolian made a strange expression on his face.

By manhua standards, the face looking back at him through the mirror would no doubt belong to the ‘black bellied, attractive 16 year-old teenager’ classification.

Truth be told, Chen Xiaolian’s age is also not too far from sixteen. He is only eighteen-years-old, a long way to go before being called “uncle”.

Thus, every time he thought of his female fans amongst his readers calling him “uncle”, Chen Xiaolian would feel a certain pride in successfully pranking others.

His face may be a little off from being considered ‘handsome’, however, if it was any consolation, it could still be considered ‘elegant’.

His height could be considered as a flaw. At eighteen years of age, he is only at one hundred and seventy centimetres. During basketball sessions within school, he could only sit on the bench as part of the assisting

group.

After wiping the water off his face, Chen Xiaolian moved his body into a basketball shooting posture and threw the rolled up tissue paper into the wastebasket.

His movements were fairly standard and were the results of him practicing in private. Unfortunately, with his problematic height, he would probably have no chance of being a basketball player.

Hmm, after this trip is over, it would almost be time for the school to reopen. If he were to fail in the selection for the basketball team, then he should just give up. Besides, just because one wishes to be surrounded by cheerleaders, that does not mean that one has to be a basketball player.

Looking at the time again, he noted that there was still some time before the plane takes off.

Within the airport restroom where there was an English signboard prohibiting smoking, Chen Xiaolian took out his hand phone and checked his WeChat. Just as he was about to leave, he suddenly heard the sound of conversations coming from the restroom entrance.

“I heard that it is about to enter closed beta?”

“Indeed, it seems that the new settings have been implemented. The instance dungeon has also been completed. This time’s closed beta would probably be very lively, some very powerful players have been selected for this.”

“Sigh, it seems it would be very eventful...”

Chen Xiaolian walked out of the restroom and saw two person wearing aircrew uniforms chatting.

What had surprised him was the fact that these two person were conversing in Chinese – in this small Southeast Asian country, almost ninety per cent of tourists are Chinese. However, it was rare to meet a pilot who speaks in Chinese...

In addition, their topic of conversation that was obviously regarding

online games also stoked Chen Xiaolian's curiosity.

Closed beta... instance dungeon... players...

"I am sorry, please excuse me," Chen Xiaolian smiled politely, showing some shyness at the same time.

The two crew members gave Chen Xiaolian a glance and immediately made way for him through the restroom entrance.

Chen Xiaolian walked two steps forward when he suddenly heard someone shouting for him from behind.

"Wait a moment, you dropped something."

Turning his head, Chen Xiaolian saw the left most lanky looking pilot bending over to pick up something from the ground. He then handed it over to Chen Xiaolian. "Your boarding pass?"

Chen Xiaolian glanced over it and found that it was really his. It must have fallen off when he was retrieving his tissue papers from his bag.

He hastily said a few words of thanks, but the pilot narrowed his eyes as he glanced over Chen Xiaolian. "Flight XX3307? Interesting..."

What kind of words are those?

Moreover, Chen Xiaolian instinctively felt that the way the other person was looking at him was a little strange.

"I can only say... I wish you good luck."

Those were the last words said by the pilot. After that, he waved goodbye with his hands and left with his companion in another direction.

How baffling!

Chen Xiaolian stared blankly at the pilots back.

Do airline companies hire their pilots in such a casual manner these days?

That person must have some brain problems, right? I wonder who would be so unfortunate as to ride on the plane he flies!

...

This minor event did not stay in Chen Xiaolian's mind for too long. He went back to the waiting room, had another round of coffee and played mobile games for a while. After an hour, Chen Xiaolian began to board the plane.

As he was boarding, he was surprised to find that amongst the crewmembers greeting the passengers at the airplane entrance, was none other than the "I wish you good luck" fellow!

Chen Xiaolian was shocked senseless, however, the other party only smiled and nodded towards him. After that, the pilot turned around and headed into the cockpit.

The flight attendant politely guided Chen Xiaolian towards his seat. The space given to First Class was very wide and he sat down before changing into a pair of slippers. Chen Xiaolian then turned to the flight attendant and requested a glass of beer.

He has a mild discomfort towards flight, also known as motion sickness. By drinking some alcoholic drinks, he hoped to be able to fall asleep after boarding the plane. That would be for the best.

After drinking a mouthful of beer, someone sat down on the passenger seat beside him. He gave the passenger a glance and saw a little loli with a short bob cut hair... neat and clean, with a pair of big, black eyes. She wore a light blue short skirt as she sat on the passenger seat, her pair of white legs dangling freely in the air – Hmm, this act had exposed her height. When she was seated, her legs could no longer reach the ground.

Considering Chen Xiaolian's age, he is naturally not a lolicon. (That is something exclusive to uncles!)

He was only curious as to why a child at such an age would board a plane alone. In addition, this was an international flight.

Realizing that Chen Xiaolian was looking at her, the little girl made a brief eye contact with Chen Xiaolian. She then nodded politely in a seemingly subconscious manner; however, her attitude remained cold, as

though the nod earlier was simply an instinctive etiquette.

Later, she seemed to have received a phone call. She retrieved her phone and spoke into the phone with a childish voice.

“Unnie... Omo... Imnida...”

Chen Xiaolian chuckled to himself: A Korean loli...

Seemingly aware that he was still looking at her, her eyes became colder. When she saw Chen Xiaolian's teenage face that indicated that he was not that old, but was holding on to a glass of beer... her eyes seemed to show traces of disapproval.

Well, I am now being despised.

Chen Xiaolian chuckled secretly, simply took out his eye blinders, and put it on before going to rest.

Soon, the flight attendants gave another notice and the plane began to slowly move along the runway. After a burst of violent vibrations, the plane rose to the skies...

...

Two hours later, Chen Xiaolian was woken up by a burst of vibration. Removing the blinders, he looked around in confusion and saw that the warning lamp above his head had been lit on.

The Korean loli sitting beside him was instead very calm, she held onto a glass of orange juice, drinking it mouthful after mouthful, wearing bunny shaped earphones and listening to music.

The flight attendant used a warm and harmonious voice to make an announcement, stating that the plane had probably ran into some turbulent airflow and asked everyone to not enter a state of panic.

It should not have been anything, an airplane running into these kinds of situations were simply far too common.

However, after a few minutes, the frequency of the vibrations from the airplane seems to be increasing and the extent of the vibration increased. This caused the passengers to gradually become alarmed.

Glancing around, Chen Xiaolian saw that the first class flight attendants had already been seated at their designated seats, their safety belts fastened tight.

Chen Xiaolian could not help himself as he started feeling apprehensive.

Of the two flight attendants of the first class area, the older one who was presumably the chief maintained calm and continued using a harmonious voice to sooth the passengers.

As for the younger flight attendant... when Chen Xiaolian was boarding the plane, he had taken another look at her. She had a pair of very slender legs and her current seating position just happened to be directly opposite Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian was able to spot the traces of panic and fear within the flight attendant's eyes.

The chief attendant remained calm and was using a gentle voice to sooth the passengers, showing that nothing serious is going on.

However, Chen Xiaolian had noticed that the younger flight attendant's legs were...

Trembling!

That is right! They were trembling!

Holy shit! Even the flight attendants are scared to the point of trembling?!

Then... then something big must have happened!

Chen Xiaolian suddenly became nervous. It was at this moment that a loud bang suddenly sounded out from who knew where!

The aircraft suddenly lost all power and sounds of screams were emitted from the passengers' compartments.

One could clearly feel that the aircraft was falling down at a rapid rate...

Next, a series of loud noises rang out non-stop. Amidst the terrifying noises, Chen Xiaolian's face had turned ghastly white, all the strength within his body seemingly sapped away.

The Korean loli beside him began crying out of fear, screaming out in Korean.

As the last of the loud rumbling noises roared out, Chen Xiaolian had one last thought before losing consciousness: I cannot be so unlucky, right? I am only eighteen-years-old! I am still a virgin... I write novels about transmigrations! Am I about to transmigrate?!

Chapter 2: Can You Speak Human Language?

[Author's note: An early explanation here: This book's genre is not online gaming! Not infinite element genre ! And most certainly not transmigration to another world! All I can say is that this is a fantasy novel set amidst a modern backdrop... As for the specifics, you will know once you read on.

Once again, this is not an online gaming novel!]

Severe vibrations, followed by a long period of darkness filled state of unconsciousness.

After that, light began to appear bit by bit and Chen Xiaolian's consciousness seemed to be returning. However, he was only slightly conscious.

Forcing himself to open his eyes, he saw what appeared to be flashes of pictures... appearing intermittently as though they were fragments.

It seemed as though... they landed...

The cockpit's door was opened...

The "I wish you good luck" pilot came out...

Chen Xiaolian's mind and consciousness was still in a state of disorder and he could not maintain a clear head.

The one clear thought he had was... I, probably did not die, right?

However, he then 'saw' a fragment of flashing pictures that did not seem right!

The "I wish you good luck" pilot suddenly tore off the pilot uniform that he was wearing.

That was right, he tore it off!

It was as though what he tore off was not clothes, but mere paper!

That cannot be right! How could normal people have that much

strength? Clothes may not seem too durable, however, have you tried to tear it off before? Could you simply tear it off as though it is mere paper?

After that...

The buzzing sound within Chen Xiaolian's ears have yet to cease, causing him to only be able to catch part of what was being said.

The other person seemed to be shouting...

"Begin formation of teams..."

"... equipment... pathfinder..."

"... dungeon quest..."

Chen Xiaolian finally became certain of one thing, he must be dreaming!

He played too much games and now his mind is in a state of confusion, right?

Then... he thoroughly fainted, again.

...

"Has the team formation been completed?"

"It seems as though a few had been disconnected."

"What is going on? Disconnected just after arrival? Were the damage values for the impact timing not properly calculated? Once we go back, we will have to go pick a fight with those people from the Development Team."

"They were just unlucky, wasting such a precious spot in the closed beta."

"En, remember this BUG. When we return, we will let the Development Team handle it. The damage values from the time of impact and entering needs to be recalculated."

The sounds gradually faded away...

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian was unable to hear those voices...

...

Waking up after a long period of time, Chen Xiaolian saw that his surroundings were a mess.

The aircraft's interior was completely different from before, the luggage compartments were in disarray, with no small number of luggage compartment's lid falling off and boxes having fallen out of it. The passengers' seats were no different, many of them having being displaced.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he had at some undetermined time left his seat and was lying down on the floor. His face rested upon the cold floors of the airplane, while his body was somewhat aching.

He forcibly propped up his body.

He could also hear "pipipapa" crackling sounds. Who knows where the sparks were being emitted from.

The first thought that came to his mind was... I am not dead!

The second thought that came to his mind was... Damn!

He first inspected his whole body while the buzzing sound in his ears slowly ceased.

En, his entire body was still intact and he was not suffering from a broken leg or missing an arm.

This was obviously a plane crash and yet he had been... very fortunate. From an external point of view, it appeared that he was not suffering from any serious injuries. At the moment, Chen Xiaolian was temporarily not considering matters such as internal bleeding.

Truth be told, his mind was still in a state of confusion, panic and shock...

Finally, he heard a gentle sound of crying coming out from beside him.

Turning around, he first spied a pair of small and slender white legs. Only one leather shoe was worn on one of them. The other shoe seemed to have been lost?

The Korean loli sat in a corner, surrounded by fallen passenger seats. The little loli's hair was dishevelled as she sat there, crying helplessly.

She shouted out helplessly in a soft voice: "ottoke" "ottoke".

Chen Xiaolian who had watched no small amount of Korean variety shows was able to generally figure out that those words meant 'what do I do'.

Chen Xiaolian tried to prop up his body, putting in great effort to stand up. He found that he was still able to exert some strength; with the exception of some sore areas and his legs feeling weak, there were no other big problems. As for his weak legs, it was probably due to the fear he was feeling.

The passenger compartment was in a broken state.

On the right hand side, a huge hole was torn off and the door of the passenger compartment had disappeared to who knows where.

Above his head, a hole was ripped out, creating a form of skylight. The ripped out metals hung down, flashing every now and again.

Chen Xiaolian's instinct told him that something was amiss. However, he was temporarily unable to understand what exactly was amiss.

He subconsciously shouted out. "Is there anyone here?"

Well, he had in fact wanted to directly shout "help". However, for some unknown reason, he did not.

Having said that, it was not that strange. After all, how many chances are there for a normal person to shout out the word "help"?

"Are you all right?"

Chen Xiaolian shouted out towards the little loli stuck inside the mass of passenger seats but she showed no reaction to him at all. Her eyes were filled with shock and she continued muttering in panic. "Ottoke, ottoke."

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and struggled to lift away one of the passenger seat beside the little loli. He did not have much strength and

had to attempt this action several times before succeeding.

“Quickly get out!” Chen Xiaolian extended his hand out to the little girl. The girl looked at him but remained motionless. Chen Xiaolian chose to simply move over and used his hand to grab her wrist, then pulled her over by force.

“Get out of here!” His words were spoken using Chinese, without consideration of whether the little loli could understand. “Get out of here, out! Go outside!”

Chen Xiaolian pulled the Korean girl out and pointed towards the torn out section of the passenger compartment.

He too tried moving outside.

“Is there anyone here? Anybody??! {ANYBODY}??!!”

Chen Xiaolian used both Chinese and English as he shouted out.

His instinct led him to start looking for crewmembers of the airplane. Unexpectedly, Chen Xiaolian found that the older of the two flight attendants, presumably the chief attendant had disappeared. As for the younger flight attendant with beautiful legs, she was still seated at her spot, with her head tilted to the side. It was unknown if she was already dead or only unconscious.

The cockpit door was... open!

From his standpoint, he was coincidentally able to observe that the cockpit was empty!

This discovery caused Chen Xiaolian’s heart to pound with anger.

The crewmembers had run off and disregarded him, a passenger?

He then moved to the back to look around. (First Class passenger compartment is at the front and Economy Class is at the back.) His discovery there caused Chen Xiaolian’s heart to sink!

He finally realized why he felt that something was amiss!

The entire passenger compartment was... E.M.P.T.Y! Empty!

Many of the passenger seats have been turned upside down, however...

All of the passengers, all of them... were gone!

This discovery left Chen Xiaolian stunned for several seconds!

When he was boarding the airplane, he recalled that it was filled to capacity! At the very least, there should be a hundred people here, right?

But now...

Chen Xiaolian looked at himself, then looked towards the little Korean loli who only knew how to cry and shout out “ottoke”.

Oh, there is also the unconscious flight attendant with beautiful legs...

Everyone else is gone?!!

All of them gone?!

This realization caused Chen Xiaolian to be frozen on the spot as his heart felt as though it had turned cold!

This... the people have already been rescued by the relief team? And left? Nobody cared about me?!!

For a moment, he felt an impulse to let out a string of curses!

The little loli beside him suddenly screamed, waking Chen Xiaolian up from his reverie.

Screaming in fear, the little loli's body turned soft. She held up her fingers to point at a spot on the passenger compartment.

Chen Xiaolian looked in the pointed direction and found himself becoming weak as well.

It was a... person. To be precise, it was a... corpse.

...

It must be one of the passengers.

He was truly unlucky. Still seated on the passenger seat, his neck was turned to the side. Judging by the extent to which his neck was twisted, his death was pretty much confirmed.

He was wearing a suit, giving off the impression that he was a businessperson.

Both his face and body were painted with blood.

However, Chen Xiaolian still worked up his courage to move towards him and check. He wanted to make sure that the man was no longer breathing.

He was still feeling uncertain as to how to deal with this. However, at this moment, something happened to the corpse that he had come in contact with. Something fell off the corpse's hand and rolled over towards Chen Xiaolian's feet.

This is a...

Metallic sphere.

It was round with a very smooth surface, seemingly no different from an ordinary steel marble. As for its size, it was as big as an egg.

Chen Xiaolian subconsciously picked it up with his hand and examined it, but could not identify what it was. All he felt was that it was slightly heavy.

Just as he was feeling confused, a sound came from behind.

"{Help}..."

It was in English.

Chen Xiaolian turned back and saw that the flight attendant with beautiful legs had regained consciousness. Her body had fallen off her seat, seemingly incapable of standing up. She could only extend her hand outwards and helplessly shout "{help}".

Chen Xiaolian placed the metal sphere into his pocket and ran over to help the flight attendant get up. The flight attendant with beautiful legs seemed thin; however, at that moment she was too feeble to support herself. She could only lean heavily onto Chen Xiaolian, her entire weight bearing down on him. The young Chen Xiaolian felt as though he may not be able to support her weight. He forcibly dragged her outside.

“{Areyouok}?”

However, the other party seemed to be confused. She looked at Chen Xiaolian before speaking a word out immediately.

Chen Xiaolian was unable to understand, but was able to discern the pronunciation of the other party.

“Tasukete.”

It sounded like... Japanese?

In the next moment, Chen Xiaolian felt an impulse to puke out blood.

In the aircraft, only three of them remained alive!

Besides him, there was a Korean loli and a Japanese woman?

Neither of them can speak Chinese!!!

1 infinite element is a genre which was apparently first popularized in the novel Terror Infinity. In these novels, elements such as religion, science, myths, movies, animations, history, etc. would all be inserted.

Chapter 3: We Will Not Die!

Chen Xiaolian had both the Korean loli and the Japanese flight attendant brought outside the airplane.

The little loli could still move by herself. The flight attendant on the other hand could not move even a single step. It was unknown if this was due to fear or if her legs were injured. Back when he was helping the flight attendant out of the airplane, it seemed as though her soft breasts were pressed down onto his shoulders; however, Chen Xiaolian did not give it any thought – Matters of life is more important right now! Who would spare a thought to these messy thoughts!

After having moved around more than ten meters of distance away from the airplane, the three of them sat on the ground.

Only after he felt that they were all right did Chen Xiaolian returned to take a look at the airplane.

The body of the airplane was still intact, albeit barely. As for the two wings, they had disappeared. It seemed that it had been broken off.

They were currently in a forest area – Judging from the vegetation here... Well, truth be told, Chen Xiaolian did not know what to make of them.

He is not an experienced person in the field of wilderness survival. He could not utilize the vegetation to determine where they are and whether this place is a tropical zone or a temperate zone. He was unable to differentiate between those.

The scenery on the other hand, was enough to put any person into shock.

Behind the airplane, a long passage was created through the forest! It seemed that after the plane was forced down, it had ploughed its way through the forest, creating this long passage.

The passage was around a few hundred meters in length and the canopy of trees were either broken or flattened by the airplane.

The airplane's landing gear was no longer there and the airplane rested on the ground. On both sides, trees were either torn off or blown away...

Chen Xiaolian had seen a lot of disaster films made in Hollywood, where the scenes were filmed using special effects. Before him however was a real scene and not some computer generated images. This reality that was put on full display before Chen Xiaolian had caused him to fall into shock for a few minutes.

...

It seemed that the flight attendant had begun to gradually calm down and was trying to stand up. Fortunately, her legs did not appear to be hurt. The earlier episode must have been due to fear.

The flight attendant leaned upon a tree, watching her surroundings in a helpless and terrified manner. She then started crying with a rather hoarse voice.

"{Help}!"

"Ta_su_ke_te!!"

This time he finally understood. The latter phrase of "tasukete" must be her crying for help, right?

The Korean loli just sat there and cried – considering her age, she is probably less than ten-years-old. For her to only stay seated and cry instead of fainting was probably a feat of strength for her. As for others... probably should not hope too much from her..

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and suddenly made the decision to run into the aircraft cabin.

The flight attendant saw him moving and shouted out some words at him, seemingly trying to stop him. However, Chen Xiaolian only waved at her while he continued moving into the aircraft cabin.

A few moments later, Chen Xiaolian emerged from the inside while carrying a box out. After that, he returned inside and carried out another box.

When the flight attendant realized what was going on, she stood there in hesitation for a moment. Finally, she bit her lips, took off her shoes and quickly followed Chen Xiaolian inside barefooted.

They moved out a portion of the food and water within the aircraft cabin.

After that, they moved out some boxes.

Chen Xiaolian retrieved a slightly thick outer sweater and draped it over the little Korean loli before personally pulling up the zip for her.

The little loli who was sobbing stopped, she raised her head to look at Chen Xiaolian.

“Do not be scared,” Chen Xiaolian whispered. Without caring if she had understood what he said, he turned and ran into the plane again.

His mobile phone had been damaged. Thus, Chen Xiaolian spent a long time within the plane before finally finding another mobile phone. He did not know which passenger had dropped it, however, he was unable to get it to operate. It seemed that the mobile phone had also been damaged...

He angrily cast it aside.

So fragile! If he had known, he would have bought a Nokia!

Behind him, the flight attendant patted Chen Xiaolian. He turned his head around to find the other party handing out a...

Mobile phone.

“Yours?” Chen Xiaolian pointed at her.

While it was uncertain if the flight attendant understood him, she nodded her head. Chen Xiaolian became overjoyed and suddenly started laughing loudly. A feeling of surviving through disaster washed over him, causing him to become overexcited. He could not help himself as he went over and hugged the flight attendant, giving her the thumbs up.

However, a few minutes later...

A pale faced Chen Xiaolian returned the phone back to the flight

attendant.

“No... signal.”

All numbers ended up giving the busy tone that signified that the call could not be made, including the Worldwide Relief number 400-888-4099.

The flight attendant panicked. She took the mobile phone and tried dialling a few numbers. After that, her face turned pale; she crouched down with both hands holding her knees and started crying bitterly.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he took a very deep breath, narrowed his eyes and surveyed his surroundings... surveying this... forest.

...

It was getting dark.

Three figures, one male and two females sat around a campfire.

The fire was lit using a cigarette lighter plug. Only these lighters that does not utilize flammable liquid were allowed on the plane. As for the lighter, it was retrieved from a box belonging to one of the passengers.

Using a branch, they lit the fire. After that, all three of them wrapped themselves in blankets.

For food, they had the meals from the plane. Wrapping the food with aluminium foil, they had them lightly heated upon the fire. While it was unappetizing, it was something they could fill their stomachs with. All things considered, now was not the time to pay attention to this matter.

During this time, Chen Xiaolian tried to start a conversation with the other two females.

Unfortunately, the Japanese flight attendant only knew how to speak some simple English. In addition, there was a strong Japanese accent in her English. As for her Chinese, she could probably only say the likes of “hello” and “thank you”.

Chen Xiaolian himself only had an average grasp of English. With the exception of what he had learnt in school, his other exposure to English

came from his several years of watching U.S. drama. Simple conversation in English was still possible for him, but in regards to a more complex conversation, things would be hard.

As for the Korean loli...

Chen Xiaolian had been pleasantly surprised to find out that she actually understood Chinese!

However, it only extended towards understanding of Chinese. She had shown that she could somewhat understand his words. However, in the area of conversing in Chinese... she was helpless.

In the middle of the night, the depressive atmosphere became worse as it pressed down on them.

Sometime during the night, an incident occurred that caused Chen Xiaolian's mind to become excited.

He spotted a plane flying over the skies... its light was flashing at it flew slowly through the night sky.

Naturally, he knew better than to start waving around and shout for help... Considering how far up it was, it would be weird if they could see him!

However...

A faint feeling of comfort inexplicably appeared within Chen Xiaolian's heart.

It was probably a sense of humour unique to web writers.

(There was nothing amiss with the stars and the moon in the night sky. In addition, there was also the plane that had flown by just now... At least now I can be certain that I had not transmigrated over to another world or to an ancient time.)

Behind him, the little Korean loli began to cry.

Wrapping herself with the blanket, she curled her tiny body; with tears falling off her eyes, she murmured something in a soft voice.

Chen Xiaolian walked towards her and heard some of what was being said. It seemed that she was crying the words “omma”.

That made sense. For a child so young, wishing for her mother at this point in time was no surprise.

Chen Xiaolian inhaled deeply, then crouched down before patting the little loli on her head. The little loli stopped crying and turned to look at Chen Xiaolian, her big eyes fixed into a blank stare.

“Do not worry, we will be fine,” A smile was etched on Chen Xiaolian’s face. It was both warm and firm – His words were not only meant for her, but also for himself, to strengthen his own belief:

“You will not die, she will not die, and I too will not die! We will survive and return to our homes! I promise! As the only male here, I will protect you... I am still only eighteen-years-old, I will have a great life waiting for me! I have yet to even get a girlfriend! I still have many readers calling me Great God ! How could I end up dying in such a terrible place? Do not worry! Oppa will ensure your safety and lead you to your home!”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian deliberately made a face in front of the little girl. He then shouted out the few Korean words he had learnt by watching Korean variety shows: “Fighting!!”

The flight attendant who was just beside seemed to have been affected by his final words. She smiled, then raised a balled up fist while facing Chen Xiaolian and shouted out. “Ganbatte!”

Well, he could at least understand that phrase.

Chen Xiaolian smiled at her, then turned to observe the dark forest. The smile on his face gradually faded as his eyes turned solemn.

... That night, the little loli and the flight attendant could not hold on and fell asleep. Only Chen Xiaolian did not sleep for the night. It was not due to a sense of responsibility, but because he simply could not fall asleep.

During the break of dawn, Chen Xiaolian woke up the two females, pulling up the Korean loli first.

“Stay here and do not go anywhere, I will go find help! Wait for me. Do not leave this place!”

After thinking about it, Chen Xiaolian used a very simple English phrase to converse with the Japanese flight attendant.

“{Stay_here. Do_not_move! I’m_looking_for_help! I_will_be_back!! Trust_me!!}”

There was naturally some error there, but he could not care about that. As long as the meaning could be understood, that would be fine.

Also... Damn it! This is not a test!

Chen Xiaolian searched for a fairly durable wooden stick to be used as a weapon. Then, he tied his shoelaces, took two bottles of mineral water and stuffed them into his pocket before walking off.

1 Great God. A status given to accomplished authors in Qidian.

Chapter 4: RUN!!!!!!

Chen Xiaolian left at around five in the morning.

For the next few hours, he felt himself falling into the depths of despair!

He walked towards the south direction... his watch only has the south indicating function.

He walked about within the forest for around three hours. After that, he saw...

Seaside!

Coastline.

As the rolling ocean waves crashed down on the rocks, Chen Xiaolian's heart felt a little disappointed.

He also had a faint feeling of unease.

The reason being... on his way here, he did not see any traces of human existences, not in the forest nor the coastline.

The coastline stretched out for a considerably long distance and the sandy beaches were quite the sight to behold. From a tourism perspective, this was a very suitable spot to be developed into a holiday destination. However, there were no traces of human activity here at all.

The beach was clean, devoid of any leftover items or rubbish that could indicate towards human activities.

The same held true for the forest.

Chen Xiaolian furiously roared out against the ocean, venting out the rage within his heart for a moment.

"I do not believe that I will fail to find anyone!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian forcefully kicked a stone away.

Considering how many people had disappeared from the airplane, it must mean that they had left... that meant there should be people here! They must certainly have been rescued! However, why did they leave

without taking him along?

Well, for them to not take that corpse with them was understandable. After all, it was very obvious that the person had already died...

But I am not dead!!!

There was also that Korean loli, and the flight attendant. They are not dead!!!

Why did they not save us three?!

Chen Xiaolian vowed that when he found them, he would give the airplane captain a vicious beating!

He retraced his steps and returned.

It was about four in the afternoon that Chen Xiaolian finally returned to the starting point that he was at in the morning.

Spotting the ruined airplane, Chen Xiaolian gave a sigh of relief.

En! I did not get lost! If I had ended up getting lost in the forest, then I would be as good as dead.

However, when Chen Xiaolian returned to the starting point, he suddenly froze.

The fire had been extinguished, and...

The two females were gone.

“Damn it! You cannot be serious! Both of them ran off on their own?!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt himself about to fall into madness.

The fatigue from walking for a whole day, plus the hunger in his stomach... the two bottles of mineral water had long since been fully consumed by him.

“They actually left without waiting for me? Did someone rescue them?”
Chen Xiaolian furiously kicked the ashes of the fire.

It was at this moment in time that he suddenly heard a voice.

The voice had come from the wrecked aircraft cabin!

He turned his head to see a head partially sticking out from the damaged aircraft cabin. It was the flight attendant.

The flight attendant was in a dishevelled state. Her face that had originally been very beautiful was currently facing him as she screamed out in an incredibly sharp voice.

“{E_here}!!! {E_here}!!!”

A small feeling of relief appeared within Chen Xiaolian’s heart. He was relieved to know that he was not the only one left...

He smiled bitterly as he walked towards the wrecked airplane. As he was walking there, he shouted out without caring if they understood him. “Didn’t I say do not move away? Do you know how scared I was when I saw no one there...”

The face of the Japanese flight attendant suddenly became filled with fear and she screamed out in a panicked voice: “{RUN}!!!!!!!”

...

In the future, whenever Chen Xiaolian recalled the events of today, he would be visited by an abnormal feeling of relief. He felt relief at the way he had reacted.

Back then, he did not make any redundant motions, did not utter any nonsense nor did he leisurely tried to seek an explanation from the other party.

Once he heard the Japanese flight attendant’s scream, his body seemed to move out of instinct. It was as though his heart itself had already determined the quickest response for him.

Chen Xiaolian did not even bother hesitating nor did he tried to contemplate anything. The very first thing he did was...

Run with all his might!

Run at the fastest possible speed that he could achieve! Run towards the wrecked aircraft cabin!!!

In just a few seconds of time after he began running, Chen Xiaolian

heard a loud roar being issued out from behind him!

It was not possible to decide what kind of wild animal it was through the sound of the roar. As for Chen Xiaolian, he had only one thought running through his mind!

Run!!

His heart pounded in a seemingly thunderous tone and he saw that the distance between him and the panicked face of the Japanese flight attendant had been shortened!

Without showing any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian decisively squeezed out every last drop of strength that he could muster!

When he arrived at the entrance to the wrecked aircraft cabin, a flash of thought was suddenly bestowed on him and he vigorously jumped towards the breach on the body of the wrecked plane. Using that comical and exaggerated move, he flew in through the gap of the breach.

From behind him came a heavy sound of a muffled bang.

Peng!!

It was as though a heavy object had viciously struck the outside of the aircraft cabin.

After Chen Xiaolian landed, he hastily turned his head around to take a glance before even adjusting his posture.

That one glance nearly suffocated him.

It was a huge pitch-black shadow about two meters in height; its body appeared to be covered in long black fur. The huge mass of darkness slammed into the outer layer of the passenger compartment and fell towards the ground. Rolling around for a bit, it got up, raised its head, bared its fangs and let out a roar!

The pair of sharp and curved fangs and the gaping mouth left a shocking impression upon Chen Xiaolian's mind!

In his eighteen years of experience since the day of his birth, he had amassed a messy assortment of knowledge from books, televisions, zoo

and even the 'National Geographic' series...

He swore in the name of the celebrated King of Outdoor Survival, Bear Grylls!

This thing... was something that Chen Xiaolian could not recognize at all!!

It... What is that thing?!

The body of a wild boar, a feline looking head, with a sharp horn resembling that of a rhinoceros growing out of its nose! Its humongous mouth sported a sharp pair of curved fangs!

As for how violent and strong its gigantic body was, there was no need to elaborate. Its eyes, on the other hand...

What the hell!

Have you ever seen a feline animal with four eyes? Two on the right and two on the left!!

The monster turned its body around as it maintained its position. Facing the wrecked passenger compartment, it let out a loud roar. It shook its head and then began charging with no less ferocity towards the aircraft cabin again.

This time around, Chen Xiaolian was able to witness everything clearly.

Before the monster was able to slam into the ruined aircraft cabin, the surface of the cabin suddenly emitted a blue arc of light. It was this blue arc of light that had fiercely 'propelled' the monster out!

The monster fell to the ground after being beaten off by the blue arc of light, howling out with a voice that seemed to contain feelings of pain. It growled unwillingly twice and circled around its position twice. Suddenly, its body went upright and its stout front paw struck viciously down onto a tree trunk just beside it.

Heavens be my witness! The thick tree, which had roughly the same diameter as Chen Xiaolian's waist, was instantly broken off, the trunk flying off into the distance!

Chen Xiaolian's eyeballs nearly fell to the ground!

The monster slapped its nose and gave Chen Xiaolian who was within the passenger compartment a vicious stare. With a look of unwillingness, it turned its humongous body around and slowly entered the woods. It then disappeared into the jungle.

“I... WQNMLGB[1]!! Son of a bitch! Is this a movie set!!!”

Chen Xiaolian felt himself on the brink of mentally collapsing. “What is this?! Are we even still on Earth?!”

1 WQNMLGB: A popular online expletive in China. “我去年买了个表”, pinyin: “wǒ qùnián mǎile gè biǎo” = “i bought a table last year” . It is a twisted version of “我去你妈嘞个逼”, pinyin: “wǒ qù nǐ mā lei gè bī” which means something along the lines of doing ‘something’ to someone’s mother.

Chapter 5: Loading

Absolute despair, mental collapse, fear...

Within the plane, the flight attendant slumped down onto the floor, her pair of eyes were in a state of daze as she murmured something.

The Korean loli on the other hand, had shrunk away into a corner, her eyes firmly staring at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian was slumped down in a position not far away from the hole in the broken aircraft cabin. In fact, he was maintaining the same posture he had earlier in which he was trying to turn around and get up.

“What is that? What is that? What the hell... is that thing?!”

Chen Xiaolian felt his heart pounding wildly. He himself was unable to describe what he was feeling, only that he was about to collapse into madness.

Pa ta.

Something dropped out of his pocket and fell onto the floor. It was none other than the steel sphere that he had picked up yesterday. It was likely that his excessively violent movement of jumping into the aircraft cabin had caused it to move over to the side of his pocket.

Gulu, gulu. The steel sphere rolled all the way to the feet of the Korean loli.

Looking at it, the little loli bit her lips before stretching out her small hands to pick it up. Exerting some strength, she held it in her hands and crawled in a timid manner towards Chen Xiaolian's side to hand over the sphere.

“Oppa...”

Chen Xiaolian could not understand what the little loli was saying at all. However, when he saw the item that she was passing over, he felt stunned. Suddenly, he grabbed it and viciously threw it out in frustration.

A bang sound rang out as the steel sphere struck the walls of the

passenger compartment and bounced back. However, as it bounced back it struck Chen Xiaolian on his forehead.

Chen Xiaolian gave a stifled cry as he then fell down on his back with a thud.

...

Amidst his state of confusion, he appeared to be seeing countless flashing of images.

There were those from before he had boarded the plane, when he was on the plane and from the time of the accident. Each one of the images appeared like frames off a movie.

Next, the images suddenly gave out a flash and everything transformed into a sheet of darkness.

...

“Restarting execution, confirming command directive...”

“Arrival complete, 1%, 2%, 5%, ... , 98%, ... Warning, arrival failed, arrival failed! Target host body exhibiting irregular variation.”

“Warning, arrival is incomplete, errors may arise, please initiate data feedback immediately.”

“Executing data feedback... warning, warning! Data link is disconnected, data link is disconnected...”

“Beginning self-test on integration limit, integration limit 1%... 5%... 28% ... 69%...”

“Self-test complete, loading mode turned on.”

“Loading standard abilities, core mode activated. Beginner mode activated. Inputting instance dungeon codes...”

“Input complete, integration limit complete.”

“Host body exhibiting irregularity, sending feedback data on irregularity...”

“Feedback aborted, data link disconnected, data link disconnected...”

“Compulsory boot mode activated, beginning loading mode...”

...

Takashimoto Shizuka sat blankly on the floor; her back leaned against a first class seat as she looked at the young teenager lying on the floor.

She had already mentally collapsed, or perhaps she was on the very brink of mental collapse.

She had originally been terrified. Even then, she had only assumed this to be an ordinary plane crash. Although she believed that she had been forgotten by the rescue workers, she had still managed to survive. Even if there was temporarily no possibility of being saved, she had survived.

As a member of the airline company, Takashimoto Shizuka was able to maintain a calm state of being. She was familiar with the process involved. She knew that even if the rescue workers had for some unknown reason forgotten them, the airline company would still send some other people to conduct an investigation.

Even if they had to stay here for a few days, it would not be long before the investigators arrive as per protocol. Regardless of what happened, the plane wreckage needed to be discovered and collected.

Most important of all, Takashimoto Shizuka had checked the interior part of the aircraft... the black box of the plane had not been touched by anyone!

Thus, someone will definitely come if they wait here.

This youngster is obviously a Chinese. Takashimoto Shizuka felt very grateful; even though he was young, he had shown courage. He had taken on the responsibility of comforting women and children and going alone to look for help.

She had originally thought that the worst-case scenario was that they would have to wait for a few more days.

Unexpectedly...

... that monster!

If she had not taken the little girl with her into the aircraft cabin to retrieve food this afternoon... if she was still outside by then, it was likely that she would be dead by now!

Monster?

What is that thing?

Or rather... where are we?

In the face of danger, women will instinctively seek something to rely upon. This was especially true for this Japanese woman.

Seeing the youngster, the only male to fall into a state of unconsciousness, Takashimoto Shizuka felt that their future had turned bleak.

As Takashimoto Shizuka was about to burst into tears... she suddenly saw that the youngster had woken up, getting into a seated position.

...

After he woke up, Chen Xiaolian sat blankly on the floor.

He felt as though he had dreamt of something; yet, he was unable to recall what that dream was.

Fuzzily, he seemed to remember himself looking at a big black screen. Upon the screen interface, a string of characters and numbers were flashing by

However, the most messed up part was that he seemed to have an understanding of the meaning of those words even though he clearly could not recognize them.

Wait, wait... calm down... That is right!

The monster!!

Monster!!

Chen Xiaolian breathed rapidly.

A small hand stretched out from beside him, holding a wet towel. It reached out until it was beside Chen Xiaolian's cheeks.

The little Korean loli looked at Chen Xiaolian with dark black eyes, her small face carrying traces of hope, dependence and fear...

“... thank you,” Chen Xiaolian accepted the towel and wiped his face.

“Oppa, do you have a headache?”

“En, it does not hurt anymore...” Chen Xiaolian answered subconsciously. Suddenly, he froze.

Wait!

What did she say?

And what did I say?

It was at this moment that Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt his entire body violently shook! It was as though an invisible current was flowing through his entire being! He was propelled upwards like a fish that was violently detonated! After that, he fell heavily onto the floor!

In his field of vision, it seemed as though a row of pale, translucent characters were flashing by...

[Basic mode activated... Loading complete... Please check Personal Setting...]

This, what is this stuff?

Chen Xiaolian blankly ‘stared’ at the ‘words’ before him.

Unconsciously, he reached out to touch them... but, the result was that he could not touch anything.

Instead, his fingers came in contact with the little Korean loli’s cheeks. The little girl froze momentarily before shrinking her head away in fear.

“So, sorry,” Chen Xiaolian was stunned and he quickly retracted his hands. He immediately asked in an anxious manner. “Do you see anything?”

“Oppa, are you not feeling well anywhere?” The little Korean loli asked.

... He could indeed understand what she was saying!

A purely subconscious thought occurred to Chen Xiaolian and he suddenly had a flash of comprehension.

He stared at the 'non-existent words' and the part which stated 'Please check Personal Setting.'

[Personal Setting] ...

En, open!

His heart pounding furiously, Chen Xiaolian subconsciously understood: I have acquired, or perhaps I have been placed in a very extraordinary situation...

Chapter 6: Activation? What Is This?

[Personal Setting]

The screen flashed.

Physique: D+

Endurance: D

Agility: C

Energy Points: Zero

Comprehensive Melee Ability: C–

Comprehensive Ranged Ability: Zero

... (This is human setting??)

Chen Xiaolian's mind was at a loss. He was suddenly visited by an immense sense of absurdity.

This is a game? A game?? A son of a bitch game?!

Having written numerous web novels and read numerous other web novels of various genres, the well-known Great God novelist Chen Xiaolian immediately grasped onto the key factors.

Game? Transmigration? Infinite elements genre? Or another world?

[Activating coordinates radar] ... En? What is this?

Chen Xiaolian tapped it open; subsequently, a hexagonal frame appeared upon the screen.

In the central location of the frame was a flashing green dot.

Beside it were two yellow dots.

Chen Xiaolian considered it for a moment... En, the green dot should be me while the yellow dots would represent the two females...

Eh?

There is also a red dot flashing non-stop. It seemed to be constantly moving?

Its speed is so fast!

At the same time, he heard a loud roar emitted from far away.

Chen Xiaolian's mind lit up: The monster!

Wait... wait...

I am a little confused! I am a little confused!

I need to think about it in detail! Think...

Chen Xiaolian who was feeling muddled sat down.

The Korean loli sat up, running forward unsteadily. She produced a bottle of mineral water from who knows where, then unscrewed it with a great deal of exertion before handing it to Chen Xiaolian.

“... Thank you.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “What is your name?”

“Oppa, you actually know how to speak Korean!”

The little girl seemed very surprised.

“Err...” Chen Xiaolian was at a loss at how to explain it to her.

“My name is Kwan Ran Soo,” The little girl raised her head and said with a clear and tender voice. “Oppa, you can call me Soo Soo, my unnie always calls me that.”

“Soo Soo...” Chen Xiaolian smiled and pointed to himself. “I am Chen Xiao Lian.”

“Xiao Lan oppa.”

“It is Xiao Lian...”

“Xiong Lian oppa...” 练脸

“Xiao Lian (练) !!”

“Xiao Lian (脸) oppa...”

“... Nevermind,” Chen Xiaolian gave up on this pointless conversation.

“Oppa, I am scared... where exactly are we? What is this place? And

that thing, is it very, very bad?”

That thing... Chen Xiaolian helplessly clutched his head and pondered about the matter. “It is all right, this place is very safe.”

As a small child, there was a sense of trust and dependence towards elders in her. Hearing those words, a glimmer of comfort flashed through Soo Soo’s eyes. She then found a comfortable place that was close to Chen Xiaolian and leaned down onto the seat.

Takashimoto Shizuka stared blankly at the two of them.

The smooth communication between the two of them, in addition to the fluency of Korean words from the youngster’s mouth...

He actually knows Korean?

“Excuse me, you, you two?”

Shizuka could not resist opening her mouth.

“Err...” As expected, Chen Xiaolian found that he could understand the Japanese sentence.

“Please hold on for a while,” Chen Xiaolian waved his hand in a rather tired manner. “There seems to be some matters here, I need some tranquillity.”

“You can speak Japanese?”

“Hey, if we keep up with this pointless conversation, the readers will think the author is putting in filler words...”

...

Chen Xiaolian remained silent for over half an hour. After which, he got up and went to the entrance of the aircraft cabin and observed the area outside for a long time.

Roars from the monster could frequently be heard from deep inside the woods. Judging by the roars, he estimated the monster’s position and compared it with the red dot on the ‘radar’.

Chen Xiaolian was then able to confirm his speculation.

The red dot represents the monster.

Game? Setting?

Considering his identity as a writer, he had never experienced such a bizarre encounter... however, he had written about it before in his fantasy novels! Even if he had not written about it, he had still read about it!

Considering that, his mental fortitude and ability to accept his current situation should at least be higher compared to the normal person.

If this is a game set... firstly, ignore why something so absurd could happen. Solving the current problem takes precedence.

Game... If that is the case, there must be a quest!

Chen Xiaolian searched and found a frame titled [Instance Dungeon Quest] on the interface...

Open! Open it immediately!

Beginner's Quest One: Kill or capture one War Beast, obtain the qualifications to enter Instance Dungeon.

Prompt, a known War Beast: ?

There is a question mark, open!

Instantly, a smaller picture of the earlier monster appeared in his sight.

Four-Eyed War Cat: B Class War Beast. Melee Type. Growth Quality: ???

Four-Eyed War Cat?

Chen Xiaolian's face broke into a sardonic face as he could not help but curse inwardly: Why not a Six-Eyed Flying Fish!

If this is a game... then the designer must be a real bastard!

...

The quest turned out to be that powerful monster.

But I... How am I supposed to fight it? A blow from its paws alone was enough to bring a tree down!

Considering my small physique...

Wait...

Chen Xiaolian who had experience playing numerous games immediately noticed something.

Beginner...

There should be equipment for beginners, right?

If this is a game, then they would never design a quest that had no possibility of being completed. That would only get the players killed!

There must be some other items that he had yet to discover!

After repeatedly checking several interfaces, including the Personal Settings, Chen Xiaolian exclaimed!

He jumped up from the floor.

Beginner's Equipment Kit!!

Haha! I was looking for you!

Eh?

After opening it, he found a... steel orb?

Feeling a cold sensation in his hands, he lowered his head and saw that the steel orb had appeared upon his palms.

Activate!

Weng!

The steel orb suddenly transformed. This is...

A sword!

A “zi zi” sound similar to that of electric currents rang out. The steel orb within his hand had transformed into a metal handle, protruding from the handle was a beam of light...

At this moment in time, several words flashed through Chen Xiaolian's mind: Star Wars? Light sabre? Jedi Knight? The Force?

He did not even have the time to bother with the two stunned females behind him.

Chen Xiaolian tried waving this sword.

Chi!

The passenger seat beside him was directly cut into two! The cut was done in a neat manner and had left only a scorching smell!

“It is so sharp!”

Chen Xiaolian then had a sense of fear... Would I end up hurting myself?

[Beginner Strengthening Package]?

Open!

One hundred points?

Under the Personal Settings interface, a ‘+’ sign appeared at the end of his personal attribute values.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the interface and pondered for a moment before making his decision.

What late stage growth... now is not the time for that kind of thoughts!

Let us not even talk about what instance dungeons or quests.

There is a monster wandering outside. What is imperative right now is to get rid of it; only then would we have the chance to escape!

Escape this place with our lives!

In that case, add them all into melee!

Endurance! Physique! Agility!

Chen Xiaolian temporarily left Endurance alone. The hundred points were fairly split between Physique and Agility.

Soon, the points were all spent...

His Physique rose directly from D to C, his Agility rose from C to B.

I do not appear to be feeling any different? Is there nothing akin to a burning feeling or a skill empowerment feeling?

Chen Xiaolian tried extending his hands out, and punched out against the wall of the aircraft cabin ...

Bang!

The aircraft cabin wall, made of complex materials was suddenly left with a deep imprint of a fist! A deep dent was left!

Success!

Chen Xiaolian became excited!

He touched his fists... no pain! He truly did not feel any pain!

A state of mind developed after many years of writing novels kicked into action.

Chen Xiaolian did not impulsively take out the sword and go look for the monster for PK – what would happen if he died? Who knows if this ‘game’ have any resurrection mechanism?

Perhaps... there would only be one chance?

Regardless, he would not take such a risk with his own life.

He sat down near the aircraft cabin’s entrance and considered for a very long time...

Observing that the sun was slowly setting down, Chen Xiaolian decided that he could not wait any longer!

He began to get busy.

The two females watched in shock as Chen Xiaolian started dismantling the passenger seats within the plane.

One by one... he had suddenly transformed into a mighty person as some of the heavy seats that were linked together were ripped apart by him!

This scene that happened all of a sudden, caused the two females to become terrified. While Soo Soo was still able to maintain herself,

Takashimoto Shizuka shrunk away in fear, regretting the fact that she does not have the ability to shrink herself into a corner – the youngster had suddenly become dangerous.

Chen Xiaolian did not give any explanation. He simply dragged the seats one after another and threw them into the open space outside the plane.

He carefully set up his own ‘battlefield’.

The monster’s strength is very strong. In addition, it also boasts a high degree of agility... by creating some obstacles, he could limit the strength of the monster and allow him to bring his strength into play.

Hearing a roar coming out from the outside forest, Chen Xiaolian ensured that he had done everything he could in his preparations.

Standing upon the entrance to the aircraft cabin, Chen Xiaolian turned around. Seeing the two females situated upon the corners, he walked over.

“You two, stay here. Do not ever come out... No matter what, do not come out!”

Looking at Soo Soo, the little loli, Chen Xiaolian checked his pockets and found a piece of chocolate. He crammed it into her hands and rubbed her lovely mushroom like hair.

“Be good, wait for me here, I will bring you home!”

Gripping tightly onto the ‘sword’ in his hand, Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and strode out of the aircraft cabin.

At his back, Soo Soo tightly gripped onto the chocolate as she stared with her big round eyes at Chen Xiaolian’s back.

“Oppa...”

The name Kwan Ran Soo was translated from ‘全仁秀’. Pinyin: ‘quán rén xiù’.

Something else to note, Physique is the combination of strength and regenerative ability while Endurance is stamina and the ability to take hits. The author only explains this later on.

1 Once again, Great God is a title given to accomplished web writers in Qidian.

2 ‘练’ pronounced ‘liàn’ means ‘train’; while ‘脸’ pronounced ‘liǎn’ means ‘face’. They have a slightly different pronunciation.

3 The word here is actually ‘吐槽’ which directly translates into ‘puking groove’. It is used to signify a face that someone makes to show ridicule at something they heard or saw. Their face could contain doubt or other emotions.

4 The author did actually wrote PK. It means Player Killing.

Chapter 7: In Order To Survive

The open space outside the airplane was littered with tens of broken passenger seats.

Chen Xiaolian strode outside, produced a mobile phone and turned on the music, setting the volume to the maximum.

Let's try to use music to lure the monster over...

...

"You are my little, little apple~"

Son of a bitch, wrong one... The courage that Chen Xiaolian had mustered up with great difficulty was nearly lost!

At a moment like this, shouldn't something like the theme song for Pirates of the Caribbean be the most suitable one!

Oh well! The mobile phone does not belong to Chen Xiaolian. He had randomly picked it up from the aircraft cabin.

A thunderous roar emitted from the distant forest.

"Roar!!!!!"

Following the thunderous roar was the sounds of "sha sha" from the forest. In the next instant, a huge shadow lunged out!

Four-Eyed War Cat?

Bring it on!

The monster did not immediately pounce forward. Instead, it chose to walk slowly and advance with caution. This scene surprised Chen Xiaolian.

He activated the light sabre in his hands. The "zi zi" sound coming off the sword constrained the feelings of fear and impulsiveness within him.

The Four-Eyed War Cat still did not charge in. It maintained a position roughly ten meters away and stared at Chen Xiaolian with its weird eyes.

After staring at one another for one minute, Chen Xiaolian felt anxious

and shouted loudly. “Come on! Come on!”

The song ‘Little Apple’ have already finished playing! Why aren’t you crazy bastard moving at all?!

If you do not come inside, would I dare move outside?

As Chen Xiaolian’s heart became more anxious, the mobile phone’s song changed. ‘Little Apple’ has finished playing and the phone jumped towards another song...

“What does the fox say? Tchacha-chacha-chacha-chow... Tchacha-chacha-chacha-chow...”

Listening to the Western song ‘What Does The Fox Say’, the cat finally became offended!

Roar!

With a thunderous roar, the Four-Eyed War Cat charged over! Its target was Chen Xiaolian... not? Its target was the thing before Chen Xiaolian, the... mobile phone?!

Hauling up a passenger seat, Chen Xiaolian slammed it down without any hesitation!

With a Grade B Physique , the airline passenger seat with significant weight became as light as a small stool.

It accurately struck its target!

The Four-Eyed War Cat staggered after being slammed; it fell to the ground, then twisted its body and bit out towards Chen Xiaolian! Seeing the huge bloody mouth and the sharp fangs, Chen Xiaolian immediately dodged backwards. At the same time, he grabbed another airline seat and tossed it forward!

The Four-Eyed War Cat avoided the seat. It then waved down, trampling down onto the airline seat that had been thrown at it. With a crunching sound, the seat became deformed. Chen Xiaolian quickly moved to hide himself. His enhanced agility allowed him to move about with speed. The Four-Eyed War Cat tried to charge at him several times, but each time

ended with him getting away. At the same time, the light sabre in his hand left several marks upon the Four-Eyed War Cat's body.

The sounds of "chi chi" remained together with the scorching smell. The Four-Eyed War Cat whimpered as its gaze, which was directed at Chen Xiaolian turned increasingly furious.

The light sabre's damage is not enough...

Chen Xiaolian's heart became tense! After glancing around, his heart sank!

The tens of passenger seats that he had arranged have all been either turned upside down or thrown off into the distance!

Back then, he was able to deal with the Four-Eyed War Cat thanks to the airline seats. Considering how much bigger the Four-Eyed War Cat was compared to him, these obstacles effectively limited the speed with which the War Cat moved about. Thanks to that, he was able to barely fight against it. But now...

Roar!

With a roar, the Four-Eyed War Cat charged forward. Without any airline seats blocking its way, it arrived before Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian subconsciously fell backwards; he felt a powerful gust of wind sweeping past his face! His facial skin burned with pain!

Chi!

Chen Xiaolian screamed out miserably!

On his upper body, his clothes were torn, three bloody claw marks were left, cutting skin and revealing flesh!

The severe pain nearly rendered Chen Xiaolian unconscious. However, the intense pain also seemed to have stimulated a certain unknown area within his mind...

Suddenly...

"Damage taken has reached critical point, small probability of activating Exceed Alter Body Form!"

Chen Xiaolian's ears were filled with a humming sound! Instantly, his entire body brimmed with a powerful force! It replaced his consciousness and dominated his body!

“Comprehended basic Sword Attacks, Linked Dual Slash! Cross Slash! Shua! Shua!

The light sabre danced in the air, drawing a stunning image of a standard cross!

The cross appeared directly onto the Four-Eyed War Cat's body! It roared out before being slammed away, falling heavily onto the ground. This time, it only shook its head and was unable to get up.

Chen Xiaolian felt himself on the verge of collapse, the sword in his hand becoming too heavy to hold.

Gasping for breath, Chen Xiaolian looked at the weakened Four-Eyed War Cat as it lied on the ground...

This, this should be considered... complete, right?

Once I give it a stab, it should end, right?

Chen Xiaolian exerted himself and moved step by step as he staggered forward.

At this moment, the Four-Eyed War Cat suddenly raised its head and opened its mouth in Chen Xiaolian's direction...

Chen Xiaolian instantly felt something amiss!

This type of action... could it be?

Weng!

A translucent sphere of qi blasted out from the Four-Eyed War Cat's mouth. Chen Xiaolian felt as though he was struck with a heavy punch directly in the face. With a “bang”, his body fell down backwards!

Son of a bitch!

It said it is a melee type War Beast!

It said it is a [Melee Type]!!!

Are you messing with me?

Chen Xiaolian fell to the ground resentfully; the light sabre plopped down beside him.

Chen Xiaolian felt dizzy, blood from the gashing wounds on his body had stained his shirt red...

For Chen Xiaolian who still fears the pain of injections, he felt that he had done his best.

He could not muster up even a small ounce of strength; he could only lie down on the ground, staring powerlessly at the monster.

The monster's state did not seem too good either. However, it seemed to be struggling to get up. As for him...

Blood flowed and Chen Xiaolian felt his strength ebbing away...

“Oppa!”

A small figure suddenly rushed out from the aircraft cabin!

Takashimoto Shizuka attempted to reach out and grab her, but failed. Soo Soo ran out.

A small and short body rushed out towards Chen Xiaolian's side.

Chen Xiaolian stared at her. “Why did you come out! Quickly, go back! Go back!”

Soo Soo clung onto Chen Xiaolian's head and started crying again.

Then, she grabbed onto the light sabre on the ground and stood defensively before Chen Xiaolian. Facing the Four-Eyed War Cat, she used a sharp voice unique to small children and screamed:

“Go away! Go away!!!”

Her small body shook violently, tears and snot flowed down at the same time. However, she persistently stood before Chen Xiaolian's body!

The Four-Eyed War Cat had gotten up!

It moved step by step, bit by bit, wheezing through its nose. Nevertheless, it continued moving towards Soo Soo!

“Go away! Go away!”

The little girl suddenly closed her eyes and viciously stabbed forward with all her might...

“Wu...”

The strike had unexpectedly stabbed directly into the mouth of the Four-Eyed War Cat...

The Four-Eyed War Cat stared with widened eyes, as though it could not accept what had just happened. After that... it fell down again!

...

[Killed Four-Eyed War Cat x1, Loot obtained: Beginner Class Healing Type Beast Blood x2, Four-Eyed War Cat soul x1. Do you want to pick it up?].

[Beginner's Quest complete, Beginner Skill Tree activated, do you want to select Primary Skill immediately?].

Chen Xiaolian groaned; he was only able to consciously confirm it before fainting.

1 In the last chapter, the author had Chen Xiaolian's Physique upgraded to Grade C. This could be a typo.

Chapter 8: First Loot

When Chen Xiaolian woke up, it was already dawn.

He opened his eyes and realized that he had been carried into the aircraft cabin.

His body was covered with a blanket.

Straining himself, he lifted the blanket to check the condition of his chest. En, it had been bandaged with gauze, while the smell of medicine remained evident.

These must have come from the emergency kit from the plane.

After recovering some of his strength, Chen Xiaolian felt a little surprised.

Beside him, Soo Soo was leaning against one of the seats, her small body curled into a ball shape as she slept. Chen Xiaolian was able to see that within her balled up fist was the piece of chocolate that he had given her earlier.

“Are you awake?”

A gentle voice came from the other side.

Takashimoto Shizuka had originally been sleeping, but she was not able to sleep properly. She got up from the seat and looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“En... do you have water?”

“Yes, wait for a moment,” Takashimoto Shizuka immediately unscrewed a bottle of mineral water and placed it before Chen Xiaolian’s face, pouring it down for him.

Chen Xiaolian felt shy and grabbed onto the bottle of water. “This... I can do it myself.”

Takashimoto Shizuka quietly watched Chen Xiaolian for a moment. She then bit her lips and said. “Sorry.”

She stood up and performed a very Japanese like bow. “I am really sorry!

I am being too cowardly!”

“Eh?” Chen Xiaolian choked. Feeling confused, he placed the water bottle aside and coughed out. “What did you say?”

“I am sorry! Back then, I should have come out to help! You alone had to take on so much burden, but I on the other hand only hid inside the aircraft cabin out of fear and cowardice... I am sorry! Please forgive me!”

Chen Xiaolian tried to get up and reach her, but a severe chest pain accompanied even the smallest movement on his part, causing him to groan out. Takashimoto Shizuka immediately moved over to help him lie down.

“Sorry, sorry, I caused you trouble again!”

“Enough...” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Do not talk about this anymore.”

He waved his hand to stop the Japanese woman from talking. “Listen to what I have to say first.”

“Hai! Please instruct me!”

“...” Chen Xiaolian regarded this Japanese woman silently, pondering for a moment before speaking slowly. “We are currently in a very strange place...” He then pointed at the little Korean loli. “She is just a little child; there are some things she does not know of. However, you are an adult. Thus, there are some things that I need to talk to you about.”

“Yes, please go ahead.”

“Firstly, I do not know what kind of situation this is. The questions within my mind are no less compared to those within yours. However, I can confirm one thing; the things that have happened to us are bizarre. Do you understand?”

“Understood!”

“En, it is good that you understand. Also, there is no need to stress yourself out. What I did earlier was simply me trying to help us to survive... It may be more accurate to say that I was trying to help myself

survive. There is no need for you to be so thankful to me; all of us have the desire to live. Besides... back then, for a woman to face something like that, I do not blame you for being scared. It is simply a normal thing for everyone.”

“But... she was able to run out and help you...”

“Little children do not understand,” Chen Xiaolian waved his hands. “Perhaps she thought that all this is simply a game. When I was her age, I still believe that there are Superman and Batman in this world. I really believed that the strongest basketball athlete in Japan is Hanamichi Sakuragi!”

Puchi.

Takashimoto Shizuka could not help but burst out in laughter. She then quickly closed her mouth and looked anxiously at Chen Xiaolian.

“Speaking of which, we have yet to introduce ourselves. I am Chen Xiaolian, you?”

“Takashimoto Shizuka, please advise me.”

The Japanese flight attendant did not reach out for Chen Xiaolian’s outstretched hand, but instead performed a ninety degree bow.

Chen Xiaolian awkwardly pulled back his hands, tapping himself on the nose.

With Takashimoto Shizuka’s assistance, Chen Xiaolian got up and moved towards the aircraft cabin’s entrance. There, he confirmed something.

That was...

The Four-Eyed War Cat’s corpse... disappeared.

He had already heard from the Japanese flight attendant: After the monster died, it turned into a beam of light and disappeared.

However, he could not feel at ease without ascertaining it himself.

Recalling the prompt that appeared on the interface before he lost

consciousness, Chen Xiaolian immediately checked it.

An [Item] box appeared beside the [Personal Setting] interface area.

After opening it, he discovered two lines of note.

Beginner Class Healing Type Beast Blood x2.

Four-Eyed War Cat's Soul x1.

The two words 'Healing Type' immediately attracted Chen Xiaolian's attention. Without showing any hesitation, he tapped it open!

Beginner Class Healing Type Beast Blood: After killing a B Class War Beast or those below B Class, there is a probability of picking this up. It is capable of treating normal external wounds, restoring constitution and strength. Its rate depends on the severity of the injury; the healing effect would gradually weaken.

After tapping it, he found a translucent red coloured mass of liquid appearing on his palm.

It was the size of a thumb and remained suspended upon his palms as though it was unaffected by gravity.

Chen Xiaolian swallowed it without any hesitation. En, it did not give off any taste.

Instantly, a feeling of warmth surged through his entire body. A few minutes later, Chen Xiaolian felt the pain from the wound on his chest beginning to lessen as it gradually turned into an itching sensation.

After untying the bandages, Chen Xiaolian noted that his gashing wound had been closed and healed, leaving only a dark line of bloody scab. This rate of recovery made Chen Xiaolian very happy. Judging by what he could see, his wounds would be fully healed in roughly an hour's time.

The other matter that caused him to become satisfied was that he could feel his strength recovering.

There was one last matter...

[Skill Tree]

Chen Xiaolian opened it solemnly.

A tree-like grid appeared before him.

Melee Type – Sword Skill – Beginner Sword Skill, Linked Dual Slash – ???

The one at the back is labelled ???. That should mean that it has not been activated.

What caught Chen Xiaolian's utmost attention was a box located outside this Skill Tree named [Exclusive Skill]. Upon the box were several ??? symbol.

Tapping on it caused a prompt to appear: Do you want to select immediately?

Of course!

Only a fool would not select.

After tapping on it, he saw three options: [Element Division] [Life Division] [Hero Division]

This is what you call giving people problems! Without giving any description or conditions, how is anyone to know what to pick?

Closing his eyes, he randomly picked one!

[Hero Division selected...]

En, Hero Division? Whatever...

Instantly, the series of ??? symbols disappeared.

[Selection complete, acquired Beginner Skill, options: Fire God's Howl, Darkness' Descent, Goddess of Dawn, please select one.]

Without any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian selected [Goddess of Dawn].

...this was not because he would often use she-males when playing games! It truly was not!

He was purely attracted by the word [Goddess]...

[Goddess of Dawn selected, skill loading complete, Summon Type skill,

please use according to prompt.]

Chen Xiaolian immediately opened the Skill Table and found the option for Goddess of Dawn. He had wanted to activate it to see for himself but hesitated after seeing a line of prompt.

[Summon Type skill, usage restriction, using the instance dungeon's time as basis, it can only be summoned once every 24 hours. If the summoner is to die in a fight, then cool down begins for 24 hours.]

Seeing the restriction in the form of 24 hours of cool down, Chen Xiaolian hesitated.

There was no telling how much longer he have to remain here... he also do not know if he would end up meeting with any kind of danger... If another one of those Six-Eyed Flying Fish... ah, wrong, if those Four-Eyed War Cat monsters appear again, then he would have a skill to act as insurance in case he could not defeat it.

If he were to use it now, then if something were to happen within the 24-hour period...

Very well, let's restrain our curiosity.

Eh? That is right! Four-Eyed War Cat!

There is another Four-Eyed War Cat Soul within the items!

Open it immediately for view.

After tapping, a prompt appeared:

[Captured a Four-Eyed War Cat Soul, do you want it to become a War Pet?]

War Pet!?

Chen Xiaolian instantly exclaimed aloud!

Four-Eyed War Cat! He had personally witnessed just how incredible this thing was!

Inexhaustible might! One slap of its paw could break down a tree, this is an adorable asset... ah wrong, this is a fearsome asset!

Such a kind of monster as my own War Pet?

This feeling could only be described as pleasant!

Chen Xiaolian smiled from ear to ear and confirmed immediately!

[Adoption of Four-Eyed War Cat as War Pet successful. Please go to (War Pet) section to inspect.]

Wahahahaha! This is the FEEL, double the pleasure!

Opening the [War Pet] section, a mighty image of a Four-Eyed War Cat greeted him. Below it was a prompt: [Summon it out?]

Chen Xiaolian did not act recklessly. He chose to check out the description: No restriction on summoning frequency or time for this War Pet.

Summon it out immediately! Let this young master admire you for a bit!

Next...

A beam of light flashed out and a figure appeared before Chen Xiaolian...

Or more accurately... before his feet!

Chen Xiaolian turned hysterical...

It's body whirred as its fur sported faint tiger stripes; it nestled down in a languid manner before yawning lazily while its fluffy head began rubbing Chen Xiaolian's legs...

En, there are also two translucent marks on its head.

Red mark, blue mark...

It would be wrong to say that this is wrong... this truly is... a cat type...

But... but...

Damn it! This senior here had obviously obtained a Four-Eyed War Cat!

Damn it! You give this senior a Garfield cat!

It will have a gigantic body they said!

It will have the strength to break apart a tree with a blow from its paw they said!

WQNMLGB bloody Hell!!

This is what you call a Four-Eyed War Cat?

This is a Four-Eyed Adorable Cat!

Falls!

The War Pet rubbed its head against Chen Xiaolian's pants and squinted its lazy looking eyes.

"Meow?"

...

[Four-Eyed War Cat]

Melee Type

Physique (Strength and regen): B

Endurance (Stamina and endurance): C

Agility: C+

Energy Points: C—

Comprehensive Melee Ability: B—

Combat Skills: Tiger Rush (Melee Skill, B Class), Cat's Roar (Ranged Skill, C-Class), Adorable Flash (Are you sure this is a skill?) Growth Capacity: B

Appraisal: A type of War Pet that is very suitable for newbie Players to begin their experience here. Due to its limited Growth Capacity, it is not recommended for long-term adoption. It is distinguished by its powerful Physique (initial circumstances) while its weakness lies in its weak Endurance. It possesses a B Class Physique but its Endurance is of the C Class. Its limited health makes it susceptible to dying in battle.

...

1 Hanamichi Sakuragi is a fictional basketball player in the anime Slam

Dunk.

2 Original sentence here ‘这真的不是因为他平时玩游戏会用人妖号啊！！！！’. Thanks to the input of the readers, the word ‘she-male’ here means that even though the character is a female, the one using it is a male. Eg. A male playing an online game creates a female character on his account, thus his character becomes a ‘she-male’.

3 A play on two words with same pinyin again. ‘萌’ here means adorable, pinyin: ‘méng’ . ‘猛’ means fierce, pinyin: ‘měng’.

Chapter 9: Shitty Cat

Carrying a desire to puke blood in his heart, Chen Xiaolian tossed the Garfield cat onto the ground. He then sat down cross-legged and read in detail the descriptions regarding [War Pet] within the interface.

After a long time, he finally stood up and gave a sigh.

En, it turns out... War Pets have two forms, [Adorable Form] and [War Form].

This so-called [Adorable Form]... There! This Garfield who is showing off its adorability is what you call [Adorable Form]!

As for the [War Form], do not expect it to instantly transform into the majestic monster that Chen Xiaolian encountered before. Its War Form will possess significantly higher capabilities, however, those needed to be nurtured!

In other words, the Four-Eyed War Cat that Chen Xiaolian had fought against was a mature War Beast. However, after being captured, it was transformed by the system into its initial state, just like a new player.

Various aspects of its abilities needed to be nurtured step by step! As for the other stuff, Chen Xiaolian could not understand.

Very well!

Let us not think about this first. The first goal should still be to leave this place, then to figure out how to return home!

Even though the earlier danger had been relieved, Chen Xiaolian's mind did not become at ease at all.

This type of encounter is simply too bizarre – Heavens, I am only a student and webwriter. Is there any need to give me such a stimulating experience filled with vicissitudes?

Setting... game...

There was no new instructions in the damned [Instance Dungeon Quest].

Yesterday, didn't it say that that killing one monster would allow it to activate?

Besides that, there was one more question within Chen Xiaolian's mind.

What about the other people on the plane? Where did they go?

Assuming that he had become a 'newbie player', then...

Are there any other players here? Are there other monsters similar to the Four-Eyed War Cat? Or perhaps a more powerful monster?

Most importantly, how do I return home?

Could the outside world... find this place?

His discussion with Takashimoto Shizuka resulted in the following. According to Takashimoto Shizuka's prior experience of flying on this route, judging by the estimated flight time and if the aircraft did not go off course, then their crash site would be somewhere within the South Pacific Ocean.

In the beginning, everyone was feeling confident. They felt that even if they could not find any way out, they could stay here and wait for the arrival of rescue workers. But, with the appearance of such a terrifying monster, this confidence had begun wavering.

The only one who was feeling relaxed was probably Soo Soo.

While Chen Xiaolian was discussing with Takashimoto Shizuka in low tones in a corner of the aircraft cabin, Soo Soo was cheerfully running around the aircraft interior. As a child, it was normal to have a high level of obliviousness. Perhaps, she really thought of yesterday's monster as playing house or a game?

En, Soo Soo was holding onto Garfield close to her bosom – that is right, it is Garfield. That is the name that Chen Xiaolian had decided to give to this pet.

“Oppa, he seemed to be very tired.”

“Oppa, is he hungry?”

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily surprised. He looked at the Four-Eyed War Cat that Soo Soo was hugging close to her bosom and saw that it was indeed somewhat listless.

They tried to feed it some milk, but this bastard gave the milk a glance and turned its head away in disdain.

Among the flight meals, there were some bags of dried fish. This cat only stuck out its mouth before turning away disdainfully.

...

“Perhaps we should leave this place and search around. This would likely be a risky move,” Chen Xiaolian finally voiced out his thoughts. “However, I have a hunch that staying in here is not a good idea. It also would not solve any problems.”

Takashimoto Shizuka seemed to be hesitating.

The biggest issue was this aircraft cabin. This place seemed to be capable of protecting everyone as proven by the Four-Eyed War Cat’s attack. It was unable to enter the interior of the aircraft cabin and was repelled by an invisible force.

(Perhaps this is similar to a safe zone for a beginner village?) This was not the first time Chen Xiaolian had thought about this.

Nevertheless... one cannot stay in the beginner village forever, right?

“In that case, it would be better if I go alone to search,” Chen Xiaolian hesitated as he made this suggestion.

Truthfully, there was some apprehension within his heart. After all... what if there are other ‘players’ within this island? The passengers and crewmembers of the plane had all inexplicably disappeared...

Would the two females be safe if they stayed here? Even though the aircraft cabin is a safe zone capable of repelling monsters, other players should be able to... in that case...what would happen if they end up meeting wicked people?

“I will leave the choice to you,” Chen Xiaolian said in a serious tone. “If

you follow me and leave this place, we may end up meeting with danger, but I might be able to protect you. If you stay here... it may be safe, but there is also the possibility of encountering unknown dangers.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian voiced out his concerns. “It may be possible that there are other people on this island.”

In the end, Takashimoto Shizuka chose to stay.

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

He himself has no answer for this.

...

As he left again, Chen Xiaolian did not feel confident despite him possessing ‘super powers’. He kept having faint feelings that the current situation is amiss and is growing more dangerous.

In addition, Chen Xiaolian also did not inform Takashimoto Shizuka everything about his own circumstance.

Especially regarding him being able to see a strange ‘interface’, he chose to remain silent about it.

This time around, he decided to move in the opposite direction compared to the last time.

Chen Xiaolian constantly kept his eyes on the [Coordinates Radar] interface as he carefully moved through the forest.

After yesterday’s fight, he judged that the effective radius of the radar is around two to three hundred metres.

A distance of three hundred metres is enough for him to react or make a run for it if he encounters a monster. However, what if he were to encounter another human? Would the other party also possess the same kind of radar? Could they also detect him? Would they be good intentions or ill intentions?

Garfield moved along behind Chen Xiaolian in a lethargic manner. Its running speed was not slow, but it had obviously become tired.

Finally, a prompt appeared as they climbed up a slope.

[Warning, your War Pet had not eaten in 24 hours. Please feed it as soon as possible. If not fed, the War Pet's health will decrease by 10% per hour. When its health reaches zero, the War Pet will die.]

Chen Xiaolian legs were planted firmly on the ground as he cursed out a string of expletives.

"Just what is it that you want to eat?" Chen Xiaolian squatted down and looked at Garfield.

Garfield: "Meow..."

It cannot be that it needs to feed on its owner's flesh, right?

Chen Xiaolian decided to follow his imagination. Hesitating slightly, he gritted his teeth as he rolled up the sleeves of his arm. "Come on, I will let you have one bite."

"Meow ~ " Garfield sniffed it and then left in an indifferent manner.

"... son of a bitch."

At this moment, a reaction appeared on the radar!

A red dot appeared on the radar before disappearing instantly!

Chen Xiaolian's face turned intense. Picking up Garfield, he looked around and quickly jumped up onto a big tree. With his strengthened body, Chen Xiaolian nimbly leapt up the tree before hiding himself amidst a dense foliage of leaves.

The red dot on the radar appeared again.

The movement this time was extremely fast compared to yesterday's Four-Eyed War Cat. Chen Xiaolian silently calculated the distance in his mind.

200 metres... 100 metres... 50 metres...

As the red dot was about to close in, it suddenly turned towards another direction. After that, it moved around in a circle at a distance of 50 metres away.

“En?”

Chen Xiaolian was surprised. Chen Xiaolian who was hidden amidst the leaves tried to search with his eyes but was unable to see anything unusual.

Could it be an invisible monster?

It should not be possible...

Following the position displayed on the radar, Chen Xiaolian finally set his sights onto a mound of soil 50 metres away.

He double checked it and determined that he was not being delusional! The mound of soil seemed to be moving.

After several movements, it stopped. The soil was turned over and a head emerged...

A triangular head and the standard body of a reptile. Chen Xiaolian judged that even if it is not a snake, it is likely to be something similar to lizards.

Damn it, I hate these cold-blooded animals... Chen Xiaolian felt nervous. In his childhood days, a snake had bitten him. Thus, the thing he feared the most is snakes!

He firmly gripped the handle of his light sabre and suppressed the impulse to summon the [Goddess of Dawn].

After the monster had fully climbed out of the ground, Chen Xiaolian gave a sigh of relief. This monster looked to be of the same type as a pangolin.

Its body mass was not as intimidating as the Four-Eyed War Cat, however, its entire body is wrapped by a pitch-black rocky hide. In addition... its body would faintly produce a pale green light. This gave Chen Xiaolian the impression that it should not be underestimated.

The pangolin slowly moved towards the tree that Chen Xiaolian was hidden on. As for Chen Xiaolian, his heart was already sweating. He stared nervously at the creature... Its crawling speed was not too fast.

However, what kind of capabilities does it have?

Suddenly, Garfield who was held close to his chest made a reaction!

Garfield suddenly opened its mouth and cried out, following which Chen Xiaolian could feel Garfield struggling to seemingly escape Chen Xiaolian's hold! Its cat hairs were already standing on its end!

Before Chen Xiaolian could react, Garfield had already let out a cry and leap out!

"Ah! Come back!"

Even as it was in the middle of the air, the cat had already begun transforming, its small body quickly expanding! When it landed, Garfield's external body shape showed some resemblance to yesterday's War Cat form.

Its body shape had become as big as a dog; an extra pair of eyes grew on its head. On its paws, sharp barbs extended out of its surface.

Garfield howled before violently charging towards the pangolin!

"What the hell!"

Chen Xiaolian was shocked. He never imagined that the bastard would be so warlike!

The pangolin responded immediately. Without waiting for Garfield to charge over, it thrust headfirst into the ground! Garfield's charge struck empty air and it quickly used its claws to scratch the ground.

Suddenly, a head emerged from the ground with lightning like speed from behind Garfield, directly facing its fat buttocks!

Garfield cried out and rolled its body over. It then stood up, a scar evident on the back of its thigh. The pangolin on the other hand, slowly climbed out of the ground.

The pangolin suddenly leapt out!

Chen Xiaolian felt as though there was something wrong with his eyes!

So fast!

Garfield was hit again. This time, the pangolin's claws left a bloody mark on Garfield's forehead. The poor cat screamed out and rolled away again. Without waiting for Garfield to be ready, the pangolin began moving at lightning like speed again and scored another hit!

Looking at what was happening, Chen Xiaolian was both anxious and vexed.

"Damn it, you took the initiative to provoke it but could not fight against it? Are you an idiot?"

Chen Xiaolian hesitated briefly. He then gritted his teeth and jumped down from the tree!

"When beating up a cat, you need to first look at its owner! Go to Hell, you bastard!"

The light sabre slashed out, but the pangolin's speed was surprisingly fast and it ducked under the sword slash. Chen Xiaolian felt a black shadow coming from the side and was barely able to turn his head.

Shua!

His shoulder burned with pain! Chen Xiaolian knew that he had been injured!

The clothes on his shoulder were torn apart and a bloody gash appeared, causing blood to flow out from it.

"You bitch!"

Holding onto the sword, Chen Xiaolian went to face it again. This time, Garfield too rushed forward.

A human and a cat. Although they were in a disadvantageous spot in terms of speed, a joint attack would give them a little momentum.

During the several times in which they fought, Chen Xiaolian exerted all he could muster to hack down with the light sabre while Garfield was also working hard at charging the pangolin. Nonetheless, the pangolin was unusually agile. It moved and jumped about continuously, leading to Chen Xiaolian and Garfield going out of breath. Yet, they still could not

restrain the pangolin.

Chen Xiaolian had already suffered wounds in four places, he could feel his endurance slipping down. At this moment, he felt a pang of regret. He regretted his actions of using his strengthening package points on Physique and Agility.

It appeared that his Endurance was too lacking. A few rounds was enough to leave him gasping for breath, his chest aching with a feeling akin to being torn apart.

Running away? Would this monster allow him to run? Considering the pangolin's speed, Chen Xiaolian would not be able to outrun it if it wants to kill him.

Chen Xiaolian looked onwards as the pangolin utilized its lightning like speed to leave another wound upon Garfield. Once Garfield was dealt with, he would be unable to fight it alone!

Suddenly, an inspiration flashed through his mind!

"That is right! I am such an idiot!"

All those novels that I have written were for naught!

"Garfield!"

Chen Xiaolian turned around and quickly ran towards a big tree at the back. Positioning his back to face the tree, he gripped tightly onto his sword.

With this, the area that he needed to deal with was greatly reduced. The pangolin attacked twice, but with the tree to his back, Chen Xiaolian only needed to use his sword to hack down quickly and avoided any loss on his part. Garfield also seemed to be shrewder; its animal instincts led it to move closer towards Chen Xiaolian.

Then, when the pangolin tried to charge Chen Xiaolian one more time, his light sabre finally slashed onto its body.

A "chi" sound was emitted and the pangolin cried out miserably. It bounced off and drilled into the ground without any hesitation.

What the Hell!

At this moment, a series of loud sounds came from behind him!

Ka ka ka ka ka

“Holy shit!”

Chen Xiaolian turned pale and pushed himself out to the side!

The tree that was acting as a barrier behind him came crashing down!

The pangolin leapt out from below the tree and ruthlessly pounced towards the back of Chen Xiaolian who was on the ground! Chen Xiaolian felt as though an iron hammer had pounded him in the back. Suddenly, pain erupted in his chest and all the air within his lungs were forced out...

Then, Garfield suddenly opened its mouth and unleashed a transparent sphere of qi...

Chen Xiaolian could only curse out inwardly: Me too???

Bang!

It felt as though he had taken another punch, so many stars...

Chen Xiaolian felt his own body being blown up to the skies before falling down. The pangolin was obviously struck as well. But, its body appeared to be moving slowly and was unable to quickly get up.

[Prompt: War Pet Four-Eyed War Cat launched the ‘Cat’s Roar’ skill. Small probability of inducing stun triggered. Effect will last for five seconds, five, four...]

Chen Xiaolian shouted aloud inwardly! Additional effect of stun?!

This is a good opportunity for a final attack!

But...

Damn it! The senior me has also been hit with stun effect ah!

Chen Xiaolian lied on the ground with his limbs outstretched.

(I can only count on you, Garfield. Quickly give him the final attack!)

Chen Xiaolian looked expectantly at Garfield and nearly coughed out blood!

Possibly due to having used the Cat's Roar, he had probably used up all its strength. Garfield had already abandoned its War Form. Its body shook for a bit and shrunk rapidly... it transformed from an indomitable Four-Eyed War Cat into that adorable fat cat!

Garfield: "Meow "

Chen Xiaolian: "... ... "

WQNMLGB bloody hell!

...

He watched as the pangolin climbed back up again...

Chen Xiaolian's heart was filled with grief: The Heavens want me to die!!!

Xiu!

A sharp piercing sound!

A sharp arrow descended from the skies, piercing directly into the pangolin's neck and nailed it tightly onto the ground!

Chen Xiaolian's mouth gaped as he stared with wide-open eyes at the pangolin that transformed into a beam of light before disappearing...

Instant kill!

On the radar, two green dots approached at a rapid rate!

"Eh? There is another player here?"

It was a woman's voice, the tone was slightly husky but was filled with a faint trace of indescribable flirtation.

Chapter 10: The Sheep Amongst A Pack Of Wolves

A man and a woman emerged from a clump of bushes.

Chen Xiaolian was able to identify the woman instantly... it was the chief flight attendant of the airplane! She looks to be around thirty years-old with beautiful and alluring features. Judging from her looks, she is the standard glamorous mature woman type.

She was no longer wearing her flight attendant uniform. Instead, she wore a somewhat over-the-top leather armour, her bosom was propped up high, the battle dress was extremely short and she wore a pair of high heeled leather boots.... Chen Xiaolian felt really curious. How could this woman run through the mountains and jungle while wearing high heels?

He noted that this woman's hand was holding onto a compound bow. A quiver of arrows hung on her left thigh.

As for the man beside the chief flight attendant, his stature in itself was over-the-top.

His arms that were definitely as thick as Chen Xiaolian's thighs were left bare. The powerful set of muscles on him was similar to that of body builders.

He wore an open neck sleeveless gown which was again, simply exaggerated. In addition, he sported a Mohican hairstyle...

However, what concerned Chen Xiaolian the most was the sword in the other party's hands!

That sword must certainly be a metre in length. Observing it, it does not even look like a sword! It is simply a smaller sized door.

"How can there be a player here?" The woman walked forward in a seductive manner, her waist twisted gently and her voluptuous thigh, coupled with the high-heeled leather boots gave her legs a slender image.

Chen Xiaolian observed that the woman had one arm propped upon the

man's shoulders, one of her breast resting upon him – Son of a bitch, one look is enough to tell that there is something going on between them.

“How would I know? The damage values for the impact during arrival was not calculated properly this time, our Team Leader had said that he planned to start a fight with the Development Team once he return.” The man answered in a rough voice.

“What does he know,” The woman curled her mouth in disdain. “Could it be that those that were left behind in the plane Awakened after we left?”

“That should not be possible. Back then, we had checked. All of them were dead, four in total, two males and two females.”

...

The woman twisted her waist as she moved before Chen Xiaolian. After that, she bent down, looked right into Chen Xiaolian's eyes, and asked. “Who are you?”

Chen Xiaolian was able to smell a rich fragrance coming off the woman's body. At the same time, he was quickly digesting the things he had heard earlier.

Damage values for arrival?

Team leader?

Development team?

The amount of information here is too much!

He did catch on to one critical factor: This woman does not recognize him!

How was that possible?

She is the chief flight attendant, responsible for taking care of the First Class cabin. After he had boarded the plane, he had asked for a bottle of beer from her. She had even personally brought over the slippers for him!

However, at this moment when she was looking at him in the eyes, she

could clearly not recognize him...

He is obviously a person!

His careful habit cultivated through many years saved him yet again.

He scowled as he tried his best to not reveal any fluctuation in emotions. Then, with a cold tone of voice, he replied. "When I woke up, I found that everyone had already disappeared. When I return this time, I am going to curse the Development Team to death."

The words "curse the Development Team to death" probably struck a chord with them.

"Hahaha ha ha..."

The woman instantly let out a soft laugh. Chen Xiaolian noticed that as she laughed, her exposed breasts would quiver...

En, they are at least D cup.

"Eh? This is your War Pet?" The woman's seductive eyes fell upon Garfield and seemed somewhat surprised, her smile dissipated as she said. "To think that someone would actually adopt a Four-Eyed War Cat as a pet."

She then turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. "You must be a newbie, right? First arrival?"

Countless thoughts flashed through Chen Xiaolian's mind. Not knowing how to answer, he simply gave a grunt in a cold manner.

"Very well, little brother. You have quite the handsome look. A little fresh meat like you is just the thing that I like the most."

This woman then extended two fingers and pinched Chen Xiaolian on his cheeks. "It is not a problem if you are a newbie, I will protect you! Haha... very interesting, there are quite a few newbies this time around. However, you are much better looking compared to the newbie in our team. That kid is just like a dummy, not fun at all."

Seeing the woman about to extend her hand with the intention of groping about, the muscular man at the back finally could not stand it

any longer and gave out a cough, his eyes expressing displeasure.

Chen Xiaolian quickly turned his head before backing his body away as he tried to get up.

For some unknown reason, there was a faint feeling within his mind: I cannot reveal my identity!

Besides... these two people seemed to be... part of the same group?

Putting on a calm expression, he retrieved the last Beginner Class Healing Type Beast Blood and purposely swallowed it before the two of them.

Chen Xiaolian noted that there was disdain within both their gaze.

Soon, the wounds began to heal, the blood stopped flowing and he could feel his strength returning.

“Little brother, you had better just throw away this Four-Eyed War Cat. Using this pet would only cause others to laugh at you. It is known as the number one failure in setting by the Development Team. Hahahaha. If you are unwilling to do it yourself, then I can help you kill it, ok?”

As she spoke, the woman’s mouth seemed as though it would end up coming in contact with Chen Xiaolian’s face.

However, a trace of killing intent flashed in noticeable fashion within her face, causing Chen Xiaolian’s heart to be struck with fear.

“No!” Chen Xiaolian immediately refused. “It is my War Pet, I will handle it myself.”

“That is enough, Sara (shā luō)! Is there any meaning to you harassing newbies?”

The muscular man finally became impatient. He walked over and gave Chen Xiaolian a cold glance. “Little kid, follow us. Do not say any nonsense and do not randomly interrupt us. After the quest is completed, we will give you a part of the rewards.”

Chen Xiaolian gave a “heng”.

“Your pet do not seem too energetic. How long has it been since you fed it?”

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a while. “One day.”

“Eh?” The eyes of the woman called Sara revealed a trace of doubt which dissipated immediately. “I forgot that you are a first timer. What is the matter? Did you not bring any pet food with you? Why aren’t you exchanging?”

Exchange!

This is a key information!

This meant that there is an existence of an Exchange System!

Chen Xiaolian was unable to answer Sara’s question. As he was hesitating on how to answer, the muscular man said in disdain. “What is there to ask? He must have spent all those initial cash on useless items. I have seen quite a few of these newbies. In one quest, I saw a bastard exchange all his cash into strengthening supplements. In the end, he could not endure a single battle. He did not even have any health restoring medicines, and collapsed due to exhaustion.”

“Hahaha... interesting. Damon (dá méng), did you really meet such an idiot before?” Sara then looked at Chen Xiaolian. “He does not look like that kind of idiot to me.”

The woman smiled seductively. Suddenly, her arm stretched out to seize Chen Xiaolian’s shoulders. “Let us go. When we return, I will find someone to loan you pet food. My War Pet had evolved after the last battle and need to stay asleep for at least two instances. That is why I did not bring any pet food with me, so I cannot loan you any. Damon? Did you bring any?”

Damon spread his arms. “You know that my pet do not eat pet food.”

“Heng, cheapskate,” Sara went over and placed a finger on Damon’s lips and smiled. “What is the matter? Jealous? Are you actually jealous of a little kid?”

“Heng!” Damon’s gaze fell upon Chen Xiaolian’s face. “Let us go! You should be almost recovered, right? Heng, bringing newbies is just troublesome.”

Damon narrowed his eyes and briefly looked over Chen Xiaolian and muttered. “Melee Type, Comprehensive Melee Ability at only C, heng. A burden.”

Chen Xiaolian instantly narrowed his eyes!

He could see my attribute values!

Is it through the interface?

Chen Xiaolian remained immobile as he tried checking it out. Unfortunately, he could only see a grey picture of the other party and was unable to check them out.

“No need to look, we have Concealment Cards. Are you curious as to what our abilities are? Tell us yours, we will exchange information, ok?”

Sara moved towards him again.

Chen Xiaolian purposely pretended to retreat. His heart on the other hand, was at ease.

This is a big chested no brains woman – Chen Xiaolian gave out his assessment.

During the course of their conversation, the amount of information that Chen Xiaolian had obtained from this woman called Sara had been very substantial! On the other hand, the vigorous looking Damon who did not talk much was much harder to deal with.

En, the earlier words from this woman had exposed another key information.

They are able to view my comprehensive attribute values, but are unable to view my abilities!

The Exclusive Skill [Goddess of Dawn] is temporarily unknown to them.

This is a good thing. No matter what, to be able to hide a trump card

that the other party do not know of is always a good thing.

...

Regardless of whether he was willing or not, Chen Xiaolian could only follow the two of them.

En, they seem like... an organized team?

On the way, Damon asked Chen Xiaolian a few more questions. Chen Xiaolian answered that after he woke up from within the plane and saw that everyone else had left, he went out alone and wandered about. As for the rest, he does not know.

“Are there any others on the plane?”

“There were three people there, all three should be dead,” Chen Xiaolian gave a vague answer.

“Why did you not come find us immediately?”

Chen Xiaolian immediately answered. “I needed to kill a monster before I could be qualified for the instance dungeon... that is what the prompt said.”

“Hahahaha, that is why you end up adopting a Four-Eyed War Cat as your pet?” Sara interrupted.

Those words ended up saving Chen Xiaolian as Damon then lost interest in continuing his interrogation.

The travelling speed of these two was extremely fast. Many times when it comes to running at full speed, Chen Xiaolian was unable to keep up – even though his physique had already been strengthened! While his endurance was still weak, a C Class Physique had allowed him to smash through the aircraft cabin’s wall. The explosive power he could unleash in a short interval far outstrips the average human. However, he was left far behind even in the area of short ranged sprinting.

These two individuals are apparently stronger than him.

This is especially true of the woman known as Sara... this woman instant killed the pangolin that had nearly killed him and Garfield!

Damon, on the other hand, was obviously dissatisfied with Chen Xiaolian's speed. After having to stop and wait for him for a few times, Damon became increasingly irritated and even kicked Chen Xiaolian's legs on two occasions. Even though he felt indignant, Chen Xiaolian endured it in silence.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly had the feeling of encountering a big spender in a game.

...

After travelling for a long time, they finally emerged out of the forest and moved towards a mountain.

While climbing over the mountain, Chen Xiaolian who was standing on the mountain peak finally saw the missing passengers who were on board the plane! They were within the foot of the mountain valley.

Within the valley, various tent like structures were erected.

On the side, there were also people hobbling around a fireplace.

The people number at about a hundred, every one of them was wearing strange looking clothes. Sara and Damon who seemed so peculiar now seemed inconspicuous.

It was Chen Xiaolian instead, with his normal jacket that stood out.

Chen Xiaolian carefully observed an interesting phenomenon: The tents within the valley were not all linked together. They were instead separated to the east and west, with many areas left separated. It was as though they were deliberately putting up space between them.

As for the people of each area, they were only standing guard beside their own tents and did not communicate with others of a different area.

En?

Different factions?

Chen Xiaolian secretly note it down.

"Later on, you better smarten up," Sara suddenly smiled softly as she

extended a finger to hook onto Chen Xiaolian's chin. "If someone tries to invite you into their team, you know what to say, right?"

"..." Chen Xiaolian nodded his head in a knowing manner. "I will say that I am already following big sister Sara."

"Haha, you are a smart kid. I really want to give your face a bite," Sara laughed tenderly. "But, it is not me. It is our Team Leader. Remember, our Guild name is the Wind Slasher Guild. The Team Leader this time is our Guild Deputy Leader, Newton."

Newton (niúdùn)?

Very well, the name is somewhat strange. However, by gaming standards... strange nicknames should not be too surprising.

Even if he was called 'Grassy Mud Horse', Chen Xiaolian would not bat an eye.

"That is right, I have yet to ask what is your name."

"My name is... Xiao Lian (face)," Chen Xiaolian sighed, the Korean loli, Soo Soo suddenly appeared in his mind.

"Xiao Lian? En, your face really is very small," Sara pulled Chen Xiaolian along, bringing him down the mountain. Damon followed them from behind.

Chen Xiaolian had a feeling that Damon was staring at him with a seemingly... sinister gaze.

TL: Just in case anyone forgot, the Lian in Chen Xiaolian's name actually means 'train'. So, he is technically giving a false name here.

1 The sentence here is '妈的一看就有一腿好不好'. It means that those two have a sexual relationship going on.

2 That is more or less what the author wrote '明明是一个人啊'.

3 The more money you put in an online game, the more powerful you are, usually.

4 Muddy Grass Horse is translated from '草泥马'. Pinyin: 'cǎonímǎ'. It

has some vulgar meaning to it.

Chapter 11: Identity Crisis

[Author's notes: An explanation here, this book is not an online gaming genre, not infinite element genre. More accurately, it is an 'anti transmigration' genre. Only thirty thousand words so far, please read on and you will understand.]

The campsite within the valley was very lively.

The Wind Slasher Guild that Sara is part of was located at the left side of the mountain. Chen Xiaolian found that the location was a very good spot. The left side of the mountain has the highest amount of steepness, thereby eliminating the problem of defending the rear. In addition, the leeward winds here were better than the blowing winds in the mouth of the valley.

Most importantly, the terrain here is clearly somewhat higher compared to others.

Glancing around hastily, Chen Xiaolian determined that this place is definitely the best location within the entire valley – Putting it in a different manner, for the 'Wind Slasher Guild' to be able to secure this piece of terrain when faced against so many other teams, their strength must be very good.

On his way into the camp, Chen Xiaolian had been secretly making preparations. Even though he had not revealed any flaws before Sara and Damon... he was very clear that a person capable of becoming a leader would have top-notch abilities, especially in the area of thought process. He was very worried that when facing the one known as Team Leader Newton, he would end up being exposed.

When he laid eyes on Newton, Chen Xiaolian broke out in cold sweat.

Newton... is that pilot!

The "I wish you good luck" fellow!

Newton possesses a lean body shape and was wearing a combat soldier uniform reminiscent of an interstellar science fictional movie. Chen

Xiaolian noted that upon his waist was an exaggerated looking metal belt; several card slots were affixed on it.

Sara took the initiative to move forward. Before Chen Xiaolian's eyes, she passionately hugged Newton – that was definitely not a simple hug between comrades. Chen Xiaolian was incidentally able to see Sara gently pinching Newton's waist in a secretive manner.

Sara conversed with Newton in a low voice while pointing at Chen Xiaolian.

Newton walked over.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt cold sweat flowing out from his back. He tried to maintain a façade of indifference and composure, carefully placing his uncontrollably trembling hands behind.

“You are the newbie that Sara picked up on their way?”

Newton's face was expressionless; however, Chen Xiaolian could feel the traces of vigilance within his gaze.

“Yes.”

“We seemed to have met before? At the airport, the washroom's entrance.”

After Newton said those words, Chen Xiaolian almost answered subconsciously. But, he instantly realized what was going on!

“I have no idea what you are talking about,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head in a dull manner.

Too dangerous!

He nearly forgot. That Sara was obviously unable to recognize him... In other words, after she transformed from the chief flight attendant into Sara, she could no longer recognize him!

Thus, if he is a ‘normal player’, then he should not have any memory from before the plane crash!

But... something is not right... if everyone would lose their memory, then

why could this Newton remember the incident that happened at the entrance of the washroom?

Sara who was at the side laughed. “Newton, have you really met this kid before?”

“En, in the airport washroom,” Newton lightly replied. “He lost his boarding pass and was nearly unable to board the plane.”

“Hahahaha... how absent-minded, Xiaolian, it appears the host body that you have been given is not too good...” Sara giggled softly, causing her huge breasts to quiver.

Sara moved forward and squeezed his face again. (Damn it, why does she like to keep doing that?) Sara laughed and said. “Our Team Leader is this time’s Navigation Staff. He had arrived even before the plane began flying off. That is how he could recall everything that happened in the Lower Plane. Back then, you have yet to arrive, it is only natural that you cannot remember.”

Navigation Staff... Arrive...

Chen Xiaolian quietly memorized those critical words deep within his mind.

Seemingly having lost interest in questioning Chen Xiaolian, Newton waved his hand. “All right, let him go mingle with the other newbies.”

...

Damon brought Chen Xiaolian over to the smallest tent, and then kicked him on his thigh. “Rest here and get to know your team mates. Remember, our Wind Slasher Guild have only two requirements: When orders are given, do not be lazy. When there are none, do not cause trouble.”

There are four people within the group of newbies, a stocky middle-aged Asian man. He sports a Mediterranean hairstyle. A young woman with a bland and skinny appearance, she gives off an indifferent expression and gaze. A strapping and sturdy white man, his body resembles a big brown bear... one glance is enough to determine that he is a Russian tribal

warrior.

The last one is a youngster whose age is about the same as Chen Xiaolian. He seemed to be around eighteen-years-old with highly average looks. However, his eyebrows are very thick, just like a pair of brushes.

Mediterranean raised his head to glance at Chen Xiaolian before closing his eyes and continued resting. The skinny female was seated beside a fire pit, concentrating solely on cooking some unknown food.

The tribal warrior was in the midst of performing push-ups. He raised his head to look at Chen Xiaolian before continuing.

As for the youngster, he stared at Chen Xiaolian up and down for a few seconds, his eyes showing a somewhat strange expression. Nonetheless, the youngster shifted his seating position to allow Chen Xiaolian to sit beside him.

Chen Xiaolian took the hint and sat beside him.

“My name is Xiao Lian (face), you?”

“Han Bi.”

Han Bi's voice was a little hoarse and he lowered his head. A few seconds later, he could not help but raise his head and look at Chen Xiaolian for a bit.

The four of them were wearing similar looking clothes, a black coloured army like protective suit. It seemed to made of certain composite materials.

“Xiaolian, your equipment have been issued.”

Not far away, Sara threw over a protective suit. Chen Xiaolian caught it hastily.

“Wear it quickly, we will be bringing you out in the night for a quest.”

After saying that, Sara left.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the protective suit in his hands... honestly, the shape is reminiscent of the protective suit worn by a certain special force

in 'Dragon Ball'. However...

How to wear it?

This item seems rigid, giving off the feeling of hard plastic. A cylindrical shaped body... could it be that it needs to be forcefully pulled down through the head?

Chen Xiaolian suddenly realized the danger that he was in! If he does not know how to wear this suit, would that expose his true identity?

He raised his head. Fortunately, none of the surrounding people were looking at him. As for the few newbies...

En?

The youngster called Han Bi was looking at him quietly.

Chen Xiaolian's heart sank, he could feel that Han Bi had seen through him.

Suddenly, Han Bi made a minor movement, which caused Chen Xiaolian's eyes to lit up.

Han Bi twisted his head. Then, putting an act of scratching himself, his left hand forcefully pushed down on a spot behind his right shoulder.

Chen Xiaolian quickly checked the back of the right shoulder on his protective suit and found a depressed notch.

Chi...

It was as though air was being vented out. The originally stiff protective suit suddenly turned soft. Chen Xiaolian quickly wore it. He turned to look at Han Bi who had at an unknown time turned back his head. Han Bi looked at Chen Xiaolian, his eyes carrying a trace of a meaningful... smile.

Chen Xiaolian became nervous.

...

In the evening, Damon walked over to the newbie group. Standing there, he pointed. "You, you and you, follow me. The rest of you are responsible

for catching twenty Firefly Frogs. Return before dawn!”

The ones he pointed out were Mediterranean, Skinny Woman and Tribal Warrior.

As for Han Bi and Chen Xiaolian, they were assigned the quest of catching ‘Firefly Frogs’.

Observing Damon lead the three people away, Han Bi turned to Chen Xiaolian. “Let’s go. If we fail to complete the quest, we will be punished.”

Chen Xiaolian noticed that Han Bi was winking at him secretly, causing his mind to be shocked.

The two of them left the valley’s campsite. As they were passing by the members of other teams, they could clearly feel the disdain and faint hostility directed at them from within the other teams’ gazes.

Chen Xiaolian remained silent and followed Han Bi out of the valley. The two of them entered the forest, continuing onwards until they reached a small stream. There, they could faintly hear the sounds of insects...

Suddenly, Han Bi stopped. He then violently turned around; without giving Chen Xiaolian any time to react, he had thrown his hunched body to crash into Chen Xiaolian!

Chen Xiaolian was greatly surprised. He instinctively backed away, but Han Bi had already produced a shining dagger in his hand. The dagger stabbed towards Chen Xiaolian’s neck!

Chen Xiaolian was startled and immediately pulled out his own light sabre. He exerted himself to push Han Bi back, then he snapped in a low voice. “What are you doing!”

Han Bi held on to the dagger in his hand and faintly smiled at Chen Xiaolian. He suddenly extended his left hand. Upon it was something small and black, with the shape of a bottle cap.

Puchi...

It was as though something was leaking out and the protective suit that

Chen Xiaolian was wearing suddenly became soft. The originally durable composite material turned into something akin to snot, sticking softly onto his body.

“This...” Chen Xiaolian turned pale.

Han Bi’s eyes lit up even more. “As I expected! You do not even know how to use the Beginner Protective Suit. After wearing it, you did not close off the safety device! This is the most basic knowledge, don’t you know?”

Han Bi walked forward, his eyes staring at Chen Xiaolian in an imposing manner. “You, are not a ‘Player’!”

Chen Xiaolian’s heart was shocked!

Instinctively, various thoughts flashed through his mind... I am exposed! What to do now? Run? Silence him?

It was at this moment in time that the sounds of footsteps came from a distance away. There were also sounds of conversation, signalling that there was more than one person!

Chen Xiaolian was able to recognize that the voices belong to Damon and the other three newbies.

This time, he had lost all hope!

Forget silencing Han Bi, he would not even be able to escape! As long as Han Bi shouts out...

It is all over!

His hand that was gripping onto the light sabre was already filled with sweat, dripping profusely.

It was at this time when Chen Xiaolian had already lost all hope...

Han Bi suddenly made a strange move. He quickly hid his dagger and vigorously waved at Chen Xiaolian – It seemed that Han Bi was indicating to Chen Xiaolian to not say anything. Han Bi also pointed at the light sabre in Chen Xiaolian’s hand.!

Chen Xiaolian was shocked. Han Bi stared at him with widened eyes,

seemingly anxious.

Chen Xiaolian followed and turned off the light sabre.

“Why are you two here?”

Damon brought the other three person over, his face frowning. “Why aren’t you working? Are you lazing about?”

Han Bi slowly replied in a dull voice. “We could hear the frog sounds earlier. After you came, they were frightened away.”

“... Don’t make excuses. If you fail to complete the quest, I will personally punish you.”

Damon stared at the two of them with an overbearing attitude. Then, he led the three newbies towards another direction and left.

After they had left far away, Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief. But, his heart pounded again as he looked at Han Bi with a complicated expression. “You... just what is it that you want?”

Han Bi spread open his arms, and slowly walked over. His next words nearly caused Chen Xiaolian’s heart to jump out!

“What if I tell you, I am also the same as you? I am not a real ‘Player’.”

Chapter 12: My Fan Turned Against Me!

“You don’t believe? My real name is Han Bi, ID number 3301XXXXXXX... Residence, Hangzhou City West Lake District... I study in the XX twelfth high school. My trip this time was done to represent my school in an international aircraft model competition. Your seating position in the First Class cabin is one beside the window. The reason I am able to remember you is because of the beautiful little loli that was sitting beside you. Am I right? As you can see, I can remember everything clearly. If I am one of them, I should not be able to remember those things.”

Chen Xiaolian listened as his tightly clenched fists slowly lightened.

He asked. “Then, how did you...”

Han Bi did not reply immediately. He first moved to one side and checked his surroundings. After ensuring that there was no one around, he waved to Chen Xiaolian. “Come with me, this place is still too close to the camp. Let us find somewhere we can talk.”

...

After walking downstream for a few hundred metres, the two of them sat down face to face behind a huge rock in a rocky area beside the stream.

Han Bi began his narration.

“When the plane crashed, I fainted. However, there was a peculiar feeling, akin to having electricity flowing through my entire body, causing my heart to beat rapidly!” He pointed to his chest. “My heart seemed to have transformed into a large water pump, and I felt as though every blood vessel in my body were going to burst. After that... the airplane landed and I realized that those around me were all in the same condition as me. All of them had expressions of discomfort on them.”

“After the plane successfully landed, the pilot, Newton came out from the cockpit. It was then that I realized that something was wrong with the people around me.”

“En, how do I put it? It was as though they had turned into strangers. It was as if...”

“They were no longer who they were.”

“How did you come to that conclusion?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

Han Bi smiled bitterly. “You have seen the skinny woman in our group of newbies, right? She is the teacher in charge of our competition participation. But, after the airplane landed, she suddenly could not recognize me.”

A cold shiver ran down Chen Xiaolian’s spine... it was a somewhat terrifying feeling.

“In the beginning, I did not understand what had happened. But then I saw that everyone was very calm. It was as though... they did not just recently experience a plane crash, but had successfully completed a journey and had arrived at their desired destination.”

“Everyone was feeling excited. In addition... the one known as Newton quickly brought everyone away from the plane. En, there were some people who seemed to know one another. These people then came together to form a number of groups.”

“Back then, I was terrified. I realized that I was the only who was different. Thus... I dared not do anything that was different from them and could only remain in silence.”

“Due to that, they assumed that I am a ‘newbie’.”

Chen Xiaolian asked thirstily. “And then?”

“After that... I was invited by Newton into his team. He is a Navigational Staff and seemed to be willing to accept ‘newbies’. Let me tell you, the other teams were all unwilling to accept newbies. With the exception of our group, no other teams have newbies in them.”

“What then is a newbie?” Chen Xiaolian.

“The meaning of newbie... it probably meant that it is their first time joining this ‘game’,” Han Bi smiled bitterly. “I have been pretending to be

a dull and reserved person. Sometimes, I also pretended to be a little stupid; I also did not engage in too much conversations. Thus, the information that I gained is unlikely to be detailed. Most of the time, I maintained silence and tried to eavesdrop on the conversation of others, making speculations bit by bit.”

Having said that, Han Bi laughed. “Take this protective suit , for example. In the beginning, I too do not know how to wear it. I deliberately acted sluggishly, lazing away as I observed the other newbies wearing it first. Then, I learnt how... that was how I did not get exposed.”

Chen Xiaolian asked in a heavy tone. “Then, what is this ‘game’? Where exactly are we, are we even still on Earth? Or, could we have transmigrated into another world?”

Han Bi laughed. “That is also the one thing I wanted to know right at the beginning.”

He then produced a peculiar looking thread and placed a few thin hooks on it. Next, he took out something thick and sticky that seemed to be a medicine of sorts. Han Bi carefully applied it on the hooks before throwing the thread into the creek, his hand holding onto the thread.

Chen Xiaolian nodded. “En, why could the others recognize each other?”

“Exactly!” Han Bi replied. “Clearly, they have experienced this ‘game’ more than once. They have teams and their own organization. En, it is just like the guilds that we have in online games. If that is true, then comes another problem... who exactly was it that organized this game? In this world, what powerful organization could create such a magical game? You should have already obtained some super powers, right? And then there are those strange monsters. Have you ever encountered such an incident in our present reality?”

“No,” Chen Xiaolian firmly shook his head.

“That is why... I feel that not even the current US government could have the ability to create this game.”

“Then, perhaps we have really transmigrated to another world, thus

explaining the strange monsters and these super powers?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

This matter is within his line of work after all. As an online web writer, the cross over setting was the first thing to cross his mind.

“Perhaps your speculation is correct. However, I have another opinion.”

“Do tell,” Chen Xiaolian squinted his eyes.

“Look around, there is only one sun in the skies and one moon in the night. There are also the seas, land, plants and temperature; day and night lasts for 24 hours... it seemed as though there are no differences between our Earth and here, right?”

“Could it be that the solar system in which this world is located in would ‘coincidentally’ have one sun as its star? This planet also just ‘happen’ to have one moon as its natural satellite? In addition, this planet’s speed of rotation is also similar to Earth. It also happen to have the same level of gravitational pull? Don’t you think that this is too coincidental?”

“Thus, in the beginning I felt that we should still be on Earth.”

“Or perhaps... this is a virtual reality modelled after Earth and we have been sucked into this world by some mysterious force; similar to ... things like online games or a movie or even a novel.”

“You mean infinite element?” Chen Xiaolian spoke out the term from his ‘profession’.

“That is right! That is what I meant! You read online novels?” Han Bi laughed.

Chen Xiaolian smiled but did not answer.

“I have only heard of some people being dragged into the infinite element... I have never heard of an entire Boeing plane being sucked into an infinite element virtual world...” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “This is still just a speculation on our part. After all, infinite element is something that the online novels created.”

“True that,” Han Bi thought about it and agreed with Chen Xiaolian. “We will need to slowly feel it out and find the answers. En... but we need to be careful not to expose ourselves. I feel that these people are not the good type. Since you have read novels on infinite elements, you should know just how brutal and bloody things can get...”

“I still do not understand, why is there such a difference between us and the other newbies.” Chen Xiaolian pondered upon it. “All of us are in this game for the first time, so why is it that the other newbies could seem to understand many knowledge as common sense while we...”

“That is also what is causing me so much distress,” Han Bi smiled bitterly. “I have come to realize something. All of them... newbies included, are all clear on why they are here. They are aware of what they need to do, aware of the ‘common knowledge’ such as the methods of wearing the equipment and those rules. However, the two of us had seemingly entered here by accident... as though...”

“You mean unauthorized entrant?” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes lit up before turning dismal. “If this truly is an infinite element type of world, then those who were together with us in the plane, are those who came from the present Earth, just like us. Do you realize what this means?”

Han Bi was momentarily stunned.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and smiled bitterly. “This means that within our present Earth, there exists an infinite element related organization! Think about it, how terrifying is this?”

Han Bi was dumbfounded and both their faces turned somewhat gloomy. Even the atmosphere had turned heavy.

At this moment, the thread in Han Bi’s hand suddenly shook and he reacted immediately. His hand pulled and the thread that was thrown into the water was brought out. Several frog like creatures with black bodies were hung upon the many hooks below the thread.

Each of them was of the size of a matchbox.

“This... is Firefly Frog?” Chen Xiaolian stared with widened eyes.

“En, they will automatically glow in extremely dark places – I heard others talk about it and had it memorized. I applied the bait that Damon gave me on the hooks. These things are easy to catch. As long as you apply the bait, it will get hooked by itself,” Saying that, Han Bi handed him a hook and a small piece of bait. “You try.”

“Would these things attack?”

“Be careful not to come in contact with the mucus within their mouth. Your skin will turn red and itch. That is all.”

Seeing Han Bi throwing the Firefly Frogs into a bag, Chen Xiaolian had a sudden thought. “I think... their next move would probably be to enter a very dark place that has no source of light!”

Han Bi nodded. “I thought about it as well yesterday. They have been sending people to capture this stuff for the past few days.”

The two of them got busy for a while and finally managed to catch 20.

As they were about to return, Han Bi suddenly asked. “That is right, you said you are called Xiao Lian (face), but what is your real name?”

“... Chen Xiao Lian, Chen (陈) with East (东) on its side, and Lian which means practice.”

Han Bi suddenly frowned, he tilted his head and pondered on something. “Chen Xiaolian, Chen Xiaolian... why does this name sound so familiar?”

He gave Chen Xiaolian a puzzled look. “Eh? I remember there is a rather famous web writer, his pen name is Fatty Uncle Wu. His real name seems to be Chen Xiaolian, could it be...”

“...hehe,” Chen Xiaolian laughed dryly and hesitated for a moment before nodding his head and admitting it. “That is me.”

“What the hell! Aren’t you a thirty something year old fat uncle?” Han Bi jumped. “You are neither an uncle nor fat!”

“Eh, that is simply a joke. I purposely hid my true state.”

Han Bi exhaled, the stare he gave Chen Xiaolian turned more peculiar with every passing moment. “In other words... it really is you? The ‘Law of

XX', 'Unparalleled XX' were written by you? I have given you a Hegemon Award before!"

"Really? You have actually awarded me with Hegemon before! Heavens, are you my hard-core fan?" Chen Xiaolian was surprised.

"Fan your sister! You keep leaving your chapters with no update, breaking your promises; this senior had long since turned against you! Back then, the one who got banned after cursing you in the review section is me!"

Chen Xiaolian. " ... "

1 Once again, infinite element is a genre which was apparently first popularized in the novel Terror Infinity. In these novels, elements such as religion, science, myths, movies, animations, history, etc. would all be inserted.

2 Chen Xiaolian's surname Chen = '陈' has an East character = '东' on its side. And as mentioned before the Lian in his name means 'practice'.

Chapter 13: I Am NPC?

The two youngsters stared at each other for a moment before letting out a sigh at the same time.

“Sigh, forget it. I do not have the strength to talk about this right now.”

“That is correct, ensuring our survival and finding out how to leave this place is more important,” Chen Xiaolian spoke out. “If we really die here... then my novel will be castrated.”

“Pei, even if it does not get castrated, your novels are not much different from an eunuch,” Han Bi viciously replied.

Chen Xiaolian touched his nose and smiled, then he suddenly spoke. “There are a few more problematic details. If our speculation is true and that we had entered here by accident into an infinite element world of adventure, then those who were on the same airplane as us are actually infinite element players from Earth. If so... how did we end up becoming unauthorized entrants? Logically speaking, if this is an infinite element world, then the Host God should be an omniscient existence, right?”

“Don’t talk about that anymore; the more you talk about it the more afraid I am... I fear that the two of us would be wiped out at any given moment.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “That is right, there is one thing I want to confirm. How did you obtain your abilities and become ‘player’?”

“A metallic sphere, similar to a steel ball.”

“... Just as I expected,” Chen Xiaolian suddenly asked. “Everyone has one steel ball, right?”

“Indeed, after the plane had crashed, I realized that this item had appeared out of thin air into my pocket – this is true for others as well.”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

Because... a trace of discomfort had suddenly appeared in his heart!

Metallic sphere!

Steel ball!

Clearly, that is something that allows one to obtain the 'player' status, something that could turn an ordinary person into a 'player', making them part of this game world, gifting them with abilities and accepting them into the system.

However... this steel ball is something that everyone has?

But...

Chen Xiaolian was certain that he...

Did.not.have.a.steel.ball!

The steel ball that allowed him to become a 'player' and obtain those abilities was not his own! It was acquired from the corpse of a 'player' in the aircraft!

Assuming that... only 'players' have the steel balls, then the player who died on the plane died due to some unexpected factors. Thanks to that, the steel ball ended up in his hands.

However... since we are both 'unauthorized entrants', why is it that Han Bi would have a steel ball? If something like a game system did exist, then why did it 'include' Han Bi as a player and assign him a steel ball?

On the other hand, I did not get one?

En, Takashimoto Shizuka and Soo Soo also did not get it!

Why is that?

Could it be...

A peculiar thought suddenly flashed through Chen Xiaolian's mind.

Could it be... everyone else are players.

As for me... and the other two females.

We are... NPCs?

...

This idea was too absurd, so much so that Chen Xiaolian dared not

ponder deep into it.

He did not even inform Han Bi about him not getting 'equipped' with a steel ball.

It was not that he did not trust Han Bi, but rather... his heart felt deeply disturbed!

By the time the two of them returned to the camp in valley, it was already midnight.

The others from the newbie group had already returned. Chen Xiaolian saw that Mediterranean was pale, his chest bandaged with gauze, and was drinking a bottle of potion. The Tribal Warrior held on to a weapon resembling a military knife and wiped it as he sat beside the fire. As for Skinny Woman, she was already asleep.

Han Bi handed over the caught Firefly Frogs to Damon who maintained his cold countenance. The Team Leader Newton, however, spoke out. "Well done."

One tent was clearly insufficient for five newbies. Thus, Chen Xiaolian and Han Bi took the initiative to move together to one side. The leaned onto a piece of rock and sat together.

"By the way, do you have pet food?" Chen Xiaolian recalled something important.

Garfield had already been drawn into the system, but the poor thing had yet to eat anything. Considering the time, if he does not feed Garfield soon then the poor cat's life may be forfeit.

Although this cat had entrapped its owner... (Its hidden attribute is not 'Entrap Owner' by any chance, is it?)

No matter what, it is still his pet. He cannot allow it to starve to death.

"I have pet food, but the things that pets eat are different. My pet food is for the Dog Type. What type of pet is yours?"

"... cat."

"In that case, you won't be able to use mine," Han Bi shook his head.

“Just exchange it yourself. Just use points for it.”

Points?

Exchange?

Chen Xiaolian had found another difference between him and Han Bi!

He simply does not know anything about those points. As for the Exchange System... there is none in his System Interface!

Originally, he had thought that he was only different from those real players... after all he is an unauthorized entrant.

Unexpectedly... even though the both of them are unauthorized entrants, there are actually differences between them?

“My points are not enough,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Could you borrow me some first?”

“Cat food, right?” Han Bi did not give it much thought. He immediately exchanged out a jar of pet food from the system

Chen Xiaolian accepted it, a small glass jar. He opened it and glanced inside to find that there are tens of pieces inside...

Biscuits!

Cat shaped biscuits!

“Feeding one is enough for 24 hours. In addition, a pet that has been fed could slowly recover from injuries and physical strength when placed within the system. Pets cannot recover if they are hungry,” Han Bi laughed. “This jar of cat food costs 5 points, remember to pay me back.”

Chen Xiaolian had wanted to ask what ‘points’ are and how to acquire them in order to exchange out those items.

However, their current location makes it inconvenient to discuss these matters. Moreover, his heart had become increasingly uneasy. He simply chose to shut his mouth.

Summoning Garfield out, Chen Xiaolian fed it a small piece of cat biscuit. Seeing his dying pet eat up, he then threw it back into the system.

“Quickly go to sleep. We may have to begin the Instance Dungeon Quest tomorrow,” Han Bi said in a low tone. “Revitalize yourself, only then could we have the strength to protect ourselves.”

Instance Dungeon Quest!

These words caused Chen Xiaolian’s eyebrows to jump.

Clearly... Han Bi knows the specifics involved in the Instance Dungeon Quest!

For Chen Xiaolian however, the description for the Instance Dungeon Quest could still not be opened!

... this is yet another difference!

Am I really an NPC? An NPC who picked up a player’s equipment?

With this question hovering in his mind, Chen Xiaolian closed his eyes. The past two days had indeed been tiring for him.

...

Even before the skies had turned bright, Chen Xiaolian had already woken up. His physique that had been strengthened was clearly far superior to the common people. Although he had only slept for a few hours, his mind felt fully rejuvenated.

Looking around, he saw that the camp had become busy. As for those from the newbie group, they were all up busy with their own personal matters.

In the other team’s camps, preparations of weapons and equipment could be observed. Strangely shaped swords and other weapons were brought out. There were also some odd looking fire arms. For example, there were those that resembled rocket-launchers, while some others gave off an extreme sci-fi feeling.

At this moment, a sharp voice was heard.

“Team Leader, look what we found!”

A tall and lanky man quickly strode into the Wind Slasher Guild’s camp.

A shining baldhead, fine lined chin and a big nose, he wore a black cloak and both his wrists were wearing exaggerated metal bracers.

“This person is called Du Ya. Be careful. Among the members of Wind Slasher Guild, this person is the most sinister and ruthless. For the past few days that I have been in this Wind Slasher Guild, I have suffered no small amount thanks to him. Even though Damon is rude, he only has a bad temper. But this Du Ya... at any rate, just be careful of him.”

Han Bi who was standing beside Chen Xiaolian warned him in a low tone.

Unfortunately... Chen Xiaolian heard none of those words!

His eyes were wide open as he stared at the one called Du Ya... or more accurately, he was looking at the two figures behind him!

Anger flashed within Chen Xiaolian's eyes!

...

Takashimoto Shizuka and Soo Soo had their bodies tied up with a metal rope that seemed to be sparkling with a certain rhythm.

Both of them seemed dispirited as they followed behind Du Ya. It was clear that they were being forced.

Shizuka's expression was one of stupor, her eyes carrying a deep amount of fear as she lowered her head, too fearful to look around. The arm and sleeves area of her flight uniform was torn off. Soo Soo was even more pitiful.

The little loli's face was dirty and filled with dust, leaving two trails of tears down each cheeks, her eyes swollen and red. She had been sobbing non-stop all the way. On her feet, only one shoe could be seen.

Under those circumstances, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt a surge of blood rushing into his head!

1 Garfield nearly caused him to die in Chapter 9.

Chapter 14: Internally Worried Externally Distressed

Before Chen Xiaolian could make his move, Han Bi suddenly moved over. Standing right beside Chen Xiaolian, he secretly pinched Chen Xiaolian's wrist.

"Do not act impulsively!"

Han Bi spoke in a low tone.

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and turned to look at Han Bi.

Han Bi looked at the two females and whispered. "That younger one... I remember that she is the one seated beside you. Is she an acquaintance? Friend or little sister?"

While he spoke, Han Bi glanced at Chen Xiaolian and quickly continued in a low voice. "Regardless, do not act impulsively... once you charge out, then everything will be over. Your identity will be exposed and you can forget about saving them! Endure, then wait patiently for the opportunity..."

...

Newton had already moved towards Du Ya. Looking at Du Ya, he then looked at the two girls behind. "What is going on?"

"Ha, I do not know what is going on either. I was hunting a War Beast; unexpectedly, the hunt led me farther away and actually brought me all the way back to the aircraft area. In the end... look what I found!"

"Two NPCs?" Newton curled the corners of his mouth. Moving closer, he looked at the two females with a cold expression. Takashimoto Shizuka was scared to the point of having her entire body shiver while Soo Soo bit down hard on her lips, tears falling down from her eyes.

Newton's expression turned odd. "I did not hear anything about this instance having NPCs. This is a harvesting type instance and the selected location is one that is not densely populated. As for those in the plane,

they should all be host bodies. Why would there be NPCs present?”

“Who the Hell knows. But... this would not be the first time that the Development Team made a mistake,” Du Ya sneered as he stretched out his tongue to lick his lips. His eyes were turned towards Shizuka in a greedy manner as he openly stared at the flight attendant’s stocking covered legs. “Team Leader, since this is an accidental harvest, how about giving them to me? We have been preparing here for three days and have been feeling too bored. We might as well have some fun. Hahaha...”

“Development Team problems will be reported by me when I return,” Newton spoke with a cold voice. “Du Ya, constrain yourself. If this was two days ago, I would not have cared what you wanted to do. However, today is different – the instance dungeon is about to open. Reserve your physical strength. If there is still time after this instance is complete, this woman will be your toy; you can do whatever you want with her – but not now! If you mess up this quest, I will personally tear out your bones!”

A trace of disappointment and indignation flashed across Du Ya’s eyes and he grunted. “Very well, you are the Team Leader!”

He turned around and moved beside Takashimoto Shizuka, raising his nose on purpose and sniffed at the Japanese flight attendant’s neck. He laughed. “How fragrant... this is truly a pleasant surprise! However, good things could be left for last. Once the quest is completed, I will take my time to enjoy you.”

Having said that, he extended his hand and heavily slapped down onto Takashimoto Shizuka’s buttocks. The Japanese flight attendant screamed sharply, dodging over to the side and nearly falling onto the ground.

“Calm down!”

Han Bi sensed that Chen Xiaolian was about to make a move. Han Bi increased his strength as he grabbed onto Chen Xiaolian’s wrist, muttering in a low voice. “If you do not want to die, then endure! Besides... you are definitely not their match, trust me on that.”

“ ... ”

Chen Xiaolian exhaled deeply, his taut body finally easing up.

“All right, put these two NPCs aside. After the instance dungeon opens, we may be able to use them to open the way,” Newton sneered. “Sara!”

Sara immediately moved towards Newton’s side. “What is going on?”

“I want you to look after these two people,” Newton laughed. “I cannot trust that Du Ya, his self-control is simply too weak.”

Sara laughed gently and sent a flirtatious glance at Newton. She walked over and looked at the Japanese flight attendant.

Shizuka’s eyes became wide open as she looked at Sara in horror. “Chief flight attendant?”

Sara laughed. “Chief flight attendant? Ah, I nearly forgot, my host body’s identity is the plane’s chief flight attendant. Unfortunately, I am not your Chief flight attendant. Also...” Sara stared at the Japanese flight attendant’s face. “Looking at your beautiful face makes me irritated. Do not talk to me and do not provoke me, or else I will carve your face right now.”

Takashimoto Shizuka’s body trembled, she bit her lips and was too fearful to say a thing. She could only use her frightened eyes to look at Sara.

Sara then knelt down before Soo Soo.

“What a cute little thing,” Sara extended her hands to pinch Soo Soo’s cheeks. She then turned over to Newton and asked. “I like this little one, can I take it as my pet? I want to make a cage and stuff her inside. After that, I will get some beautiful clothes for her.”

Her voice was gentle, but the words she said caused a shiver to run down the spine of those who listened.

“I have said it before, after the quest is complete, you can do whatever you want. That is if those two are still alive by then.”

Newton grunted and looked at the skies. “All right, it is getting late. Speed up the preparation process! The Instance Dungeon is about to open

up!”

Sara took over the custody of the two females from Du Ya. Du Ya gave a “heng”, his face expressing dissatisfaction, but he clearly dared not disobey Newton’s command.

However, when Sara was leading the two females into the Wind Slasher Guild camp, an accident occurred.

Soo Soo suddenly spotted Chen Xiaolian who was standing beside Han Bi. Her eyes suddenly turned bright as she shouted out sharply. Crying out, she ran towards Chen Xiaolian.

“Oppa! Quick save me!”

Although her body was tied up with ropes, Soo Soo rushed forward and crashed headfirst into Chen Xiaolian’s chest.

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

Beside him, Han Bi’s heart pounded madly as he subconsciously stepped back, releasing his hold on Chen Xiaolian’s hand.

Soo Soo fell onto Chen Xiaolian’s bosom and started sobbing bitterly.

Chen Xiaolian could feel several gazes turning towards him.

Newton, Sara, Du Ya... and also Damon who was standing far away with folded arms as he watched on with a cold expression. Within the Wind Slasher Guild’s campsite, several other team members from other tents had also turned their gazes over.

Towards the crying Soo Soo, Chen Xiaolian had wanted to hold up this poor child and hug her. At this moment, however, his heart was racing uncontrollably, the cold sweat flowing down his back seemed to have soaked his underwear.

The few seconds of time in which it transpired had seemingly lasted for centuries!

In the end, Chen Xiaolian did not move his arms. He only looked down at Soo Soo – his expression one of motionless indifference.

“What is this? This little child seem to recognize you.”

Sara gently laughed as she moved over – in Chen Xiaolian’s ears, her originally pleasant sounding gentle laugh had turned harsh and cold!

Secretly sighing, Chen Xiaolian tried his best to put on a vexed tone. “How am I supposed to know?”

In his bosom, Soo Soo continued crying. “Oppa, why aren’t you saying anything. Why won’t you save me... wu wu wu wu wu...”

Chen Xiaolian raised his head as he ignored her and looked at Sara. “Why aren’t you taking her away?”

“It seems that this little child is very fond of you,” Sara narrowed her eyes.

“This little child probably recognizes Xiaolian’s host body...”

The one who spoke out was Han Bi. He stood at the side and said carefully. “After all, everyone here were boarding the same plane. Maybe Xiaolian’s host body have some relation with this little child. Also, didn’t the woman earlier called you the chief flight attendant?”

“Eh? This idiot suddenly became clever,” Sara curled her lips.

Sara’s hands shot out at lightning like speed, grabbing onto Soo Soo’s hair. She pulled the little girl away, ignoring her struggle and threw her at Takashimoto Shizuka. “Hold on to her and follow me. If you disobey, then I will first kill you.”

Takashimoto Shizuka held onto Soo Soo in fear as she herself was shedding tears. She forcibly clamped onto Soo Soo’s mouth, whispering something to her in rapid succession before following Sara as she held onto Soo Soo.

Before leaving, Takashimoto Shizuka gave Chen Xiaolian a glance but dared not say anything.

...

“You owe me one,” Han Bi purposely approached Chen Xiaolian with a smiling face. He placed his hand onto Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder, putting

on an amiable look. He then spoke in a low, angry voice. "... what is going on with these two females. You did not tell me anything about them at all last night! It seems there are a lot of things that you are not telling me!"

Chen Xiaolian. "..."

"Shut your mouth," Han Bi coldly spoke. "From now on, I won't trust you anymore. If you want to die, then do not drag me with you!"

Sure enough, he then released his hands and moved over to a side, sitting down. He never turned to even look at Chen Xiaolian again.

Chen Xiaolian silently gritted his teeth and sat down not far away from Han Bi as he secretly clenched his fists.

Internally worried and externally distressed!

In this unfamiliar and dangerous guild, his future is uncertain... and the one companion beside him is now estranged.

Chen Xiaolian felt an extreme aching in his head.

Chapter 15: Rowing Without Paddles

In the afternoon, just as the sun was rising, Chen Xiaolian suddenly heard a burst of loud noise originating from the ground below his feet!

After that, the entirety of the ground started shaking with severity, as though an earthquake had occurred.

Just as quickly as it arrived, it was gone the next. The encampment suddenly bustled with activity – not due to panic, but excitement!

No small number of them was cheering happily while some others were whistling loudly.

It was at this moment that Newton vaulted up onto a rock and shouted in a loud voice that spread out through the entire valley.

“The opening time for the Instance Dungeon has arrived! Everyone get ready!”

...

At the same time, a very conspicuous message prompt suddenly appeared before the system interface for Chen Xiaolian to ‘see’.

[Prompt 1: Instance Dungeon ‘King Solomon’s 72 Demons Series has opened. Objective, kill the defenders, acquire King Solomon’s 72 Demons Pillar Fragment. This instance dungeon is a B Class Resource Type Instance Dungeon. Note that this instance dungeon produces various types of resources for collection, good luck to all players].

[Prompt 2: This Instance Dungeon is a Magic Type Instance Dungeon. Restriction Conditions will be placed upon Science and Technological equipment, skill and usage].

[Prompt 3: This instance prohibits personal feuds between players; players are not allowed to kill other players. Once such a violation occurs, the system will dispense punishment].

Chen Xiaolian carefully read the prompt and heard cursing sounds from Newton who was far away.

“Son of a bitch! Restrictions on technological types? Why didn’t it say so earlier?”

Newton angrily took out his rage on a lone soldier equipped in an exaggerated interstellar sci-fi gear, throwing him fiercely down on the ground.

It was very obvious... this restriction of technological types has a terrible effect on this Team Leader.

Similar shouts of discontent could be heard issuing out from other team camps.

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Han Bi, only to find Han Bi wearing a strange expression. Han Bi’s thick brush like eyebrows were tightly screwed together.

“What is going on? Is there a problem?” Chen Xiaolian went up by himself.

“Hmph, don’t talk to me,” Han Bi turned his head away.

“I am sorry,” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “It is my fault for hiding some stuff from you. But... I have my own difficulties. I do not know how to explain it to you, but... for now, we can only depend on each other.”

“... would I still dare to trust you?” Han Bi hesitated.

“If I am still lying to you, then when you return you can just go to my novel review section to curse me. After that, just expose that I am actually not a thirty-year-old fatty but an immature smelly brat, how about that?”

“Pei!” Han Bi finally could not hold it in anymore and his mouth began forming traces of a smile. He then sighed. “Forget it, you were right about one thing. Under such circumstances, we could only rely on one another.”

He turned to Chen Xiaolian. “The King Solomon’s 72 Demons ... what does it mean, do you know? I have only heard of King Solomon, but am unaware of the rest.”

Chen Xiaolian was in the midst of being worried about how to ease up the tension between the two of them. Once he heard Han Bi seeking his

help, he immediately replied without any reservation. “I really do know about it. Last year, while I was writing a novel, I had checked out some foreign myths and legends. I had wanted to check on some related settings. It just so happened that I had looked up on the related materials for this King Solomon’s 72 Demons.”

“Oh? Do tell.”

Chen Xiaolian pondered. “You know of King Solomon, right?”

“I have heard of the name, but I do not know what is it he did.”

“...” Chen Xiaolian thought on. “Very well, I won’t describe it in too much detail. All you need to know is that King Solomon is a Western Jewish legend, the most powerful king. Legend has it that he was a very powerful master of magic, and possesses a very powerful magic ring. Using his all-powerful magic ring, he subjugated 72 highly capable demons who fell under his control. These 72 demons each have their own mystical skills, each with their own overwhelming legend.”

“Why does it seem to resemble the Lord of The Rings?”

“En, there are some similarities,” Chen Xiaolian laughed. “The Lord of The Rings author, JRR Tolkien had indeed referred to many of the legends and myths of King Solomon.”

Seeing the silent Han Bi, Chen Xiaolian chose to not hold back and spoke out the thoughts and speculations within his mind:

“This instance dungeon is called ‘King Solomon’s 72 Demons Series and the final quest is the retrieval of a ‘Demon Pillar Fragment’. Legend has it that these Demon Pillars were used to seal the demons. If I have to guess, this item is probably similar to stone columns. Note the words ‘series’ and ‘fragment’. These two words signify that not all of the 72 demons would appear here. Likely, it would only be one of the 72.

As for the defenders, they should be the ones who watch over and protect the BOSS.”

Han Bi nodded his head. “There is the prompt stating something about it being B Class Resource Type Instance Dungeon. I am unclear about the

Class, but the meaning of Resource Type should be literal...”

“Indeed! If I am not mistaken, the ‘72 Demon Pillar Fragment’ also acts as this instance dungeon’s ‘first prize’. Besides that though, there should also be many other resources and good items that can be attained from this instance dungeon – if there is only one first prize in an instance dungeon, then there would not have been so many teams running over to participate.

Thus, in addition to the biggest reward, there must also be many valuable commemoration reward, participation reward. That is why so many teams would choose to participate.”

Hearing all that, Han Bi nodded his head and looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Is there anything else you are not telling me?”

“... yes,” Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment and decided to tell the truth. “However, due to the fact that I have yet to figure out what the problem is... I am sorry, I am temporarily unable to tell you.”

“... I will grudgingly accept this explanation,” Han Bi smiled bitterly. “All is good as long as you can admit it. At least this shows your sincerity. If you cannot even admit, then I will not cooperate with you anymore. Even if the both of us are unauthorized entrants.”

“In that case... cooperation?” Chen Xiaolian stared at Han Bi’s eyes.

“...cooperation!” Han Bi directed a heavy look at Chen Xiaolian.

...

At this moment, Newton’s commanding voice sounded out. “The instance dungeon’s door has opened! Prepare to enter!”

At an unknown moment, a cavern hole had appeared on the walls under the tallest peak situated at the side of the valley. It was as though the stone there had oddly ‘dissolved’ away, revealing a hole of stone that resembled a city gate.

Above the cavern hole was a layer of green screen.

“Move move move! Move in!”

The teams gathered at the entrance of the stone cave. There was no occurrence of fights as they orderly entered the cave.

Newton himself was standing before the entrance towards the stone cave while the other members of the Wind Slasher Guild entered the stone cave under his watch.

Chen Xiaolian realized that whenever someone entered the stone cave, they will need to pass through the layer of green screen. The surface of the green screen will produce a layer of light that would quickly scan the person below it from top to bottom.

The only exception was when Sara was bringing Takashimoto Shizuka and Soo Soo in.

As the two females were made to move through the screen of light, the screen suddenly changed its colour into that of yellowish orange.

It seemed to be a recognition of identity?

The difference in colour is the difference in identity between 'player' and 'NPC'?

As the time came for Chen Xiaolian to enter, his heart became anxious. He could even hear the racing sound of his beating heart.

Newton stood to the side, seemingly narrowing his eyes as he looked at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian braced himself and moved forward...

Thankfully, after the green light had scanned through his entire body – the screen remained green, not showing any change at all.

Chen Xiaolian gave a sigh of relief. As for Newton who was standing off to the side, his gaze eased up and he casually looked away.

...

The interior of the cave was simply astonishing.

It appeared as though the mountain itself had been hollowed out as there were traces indicating that the walls within the stone cave were cut.

The ground below their feet was level. Moving forward, they found that a flight of stairs leading downwards had been prepared.

However, all of it was clearly reeking of a stench of decay and staleness.

A member of the Wind Slasher Guild started drawing patterns that appeared similar to flame totems. Chen Xiaolian did not know this person's name, only that he had his face smeared with a great deal of paint.

The Pattern Man stood inside the cave. Every member of the Wind Slasher Team who walked pass him would receive a bottle of something from him.

When Chen Xiaolian and Han Bi accepted the item, Pattern Man recognized that they were newbies and indifferently spoke out a sentence. "Secretion from Firefly Frog, take it! You will be using it later."

There were 10 members within the Wind Slasher Team. For the newbie group, there were 5, including Chen Xiaolian.

As for the veteran members, there was the Team Leader Newton, Sara, Damon, Du Ya, Pattern Man – It was then that Chen Xiaolian suddenly realized that among the veteran members of the Wind Slasher Guild, Sara was the only female.

This was very different compared to the other teams. In the other teams, the ratio between males and females was not that big.

To Chen Xiaolian's surprise, he noticed that as Sara was retrieving the bottle of Firefly Frog secretion from Pattern Man's hands, she had thrown him a charming glance. With a face filled with a flirtatious smile, she extended her hand out to pinch the robust arms of Pattern Man...

This woman. Why does it look as though she has a relationship going on with every male member of the team?

Seemingly aware of Chen Xiaolian's suspicions, Han Bi moved close beside him and chuckled in a low tone. "That Sara is not a simple person. She fawns left and right within this guild, skilfully currying favours with her assets, she must certainly be a top grade socialite."

Chen Xiaolian recalled how abnormal this woman was when she was dealing with Takashimoto Shizuka and the remarks of how she would like to put Soo Soo in a cage as a pet...

He gave a light sigh and muttered a phrase.

Han Bi asked. "What is it that you were muttering to yourself?"

"A veteran whore can row the boat without paddles..."

"Eh? What does that mean? What will she use then?"

"The waves of course."

"..." Han Bi rolled his eyes. "You really are a writer!"

1 The phrase is '老婊子划船不用桨啊' it could also mean a beauty can row a boat without paddles, the waves will do it for her. The waves here indicate her sensuality and beauty.

Chapter 16: Xiaolian's Discovery

They went deeper down the caves.

After walking for around a few hundred metres, a vast expanse suddenly appeared before them.

Everyone entered this wide-open space.

This wide-open space is about as big as a school field. Although there were around a hundred people entering into this place, it did not feel crowded at all.

Many people produced illumination devices, many of which were of the sci-fi type of tactical flashlight. There were also items that could light up by itself, akin to magic wands. Others began starting a fire by themselves.

In just a moment's time, the wide-open space became as bright as day thanks to the illumination.

Everyone stopped here, because...

This wide-open space has several passages.

Every team members stopped moving here. After which, no small number of them turned to look towards Newton.

Newton sneered and shouted loudly. "What are you looking at me for? I am only a Navigational Staff. From the moment the plane landed, my task has been completed. As for how to complete the quest, do you expect me to help? Now that you are here, you are on your own!"

The other team members all dispersed. Many of them spread out as they carefully searched around the wide-open space, trying to find anything that could serve as clues.

Chen Xiaolian saw that the Wind Slasher Guild did not show any intention of restricting him from taking actions on his own; he went towards Han Bi. He pulled Han Bi together and went around to make their own observation.

After looking around for a while, Chen Xiaolian stole a glance at his

surroundings to ensure that there was a big distance between him and those from the Wind Slasher Guild... and others. He then tugged Han Bi.

“I need to ask you something.”

“En?”

“About this instance dungeon, King Solomon’s 72 Demons,” Chen Xiaolian carefully selected his words and slowly asked. “The name of this instance dungeon, did you just find out about it from the announcement earlier, or... have you known about it a long time ago?”

“Naturally, I knew about it a long time ago,” Han Bi frowned. “After using the steel ball, I already knew about the name of this instance dungeon. However, as we were leaving the aircraft, I heard them discussing something about the King Solomon’s 72 Demons. It seemed as though they had already made preparations before coming here. They had already known what this instance dungeon is a long time ago.”

“All right, I understand.”

A foundation was formed within Chen Xiaolian’s mind. He nodded and maintained his silence.

“What did you find?” Han Bi looked at Chen Xiaolian who was wearing a calm expression.

“There is one more factor that I need to examine.”

As the time began ticking away, some teams had rapidly made a choice of entering one of the passages and moved out by themselves.

As the other teams left one after another, the number of people within the wide-open space gradually declined.

The members of the Wind Slasher Guild then grouped together.

“Did anyone find anything?” Newton played the role of a Team Leader effectively. “Everyone speak out, we will discuss it for a moment. With so many passages, I believe that choosing the correct one would be the only way to complete the quest.”

“Why don’t we divide our forces?” Du Ya spoke out.

Newton's expression turned heavy and he coldly replied. "Divide our forces? We only have a total of 10 members. If we are to spread our forces, what are we to do if we need to compete with the other teams to snatch the treasure? Divided we fall. When the time comes, how are we to fight back?"

Du Ya became disappointed and stayed silent after giving a "heng".

Chen Xiaolian secretly glanced at him. He had originally lumped Du Ya into the ranks of idiots with disdain. However, he suddenly had another train of thought. For such a simple-minded person to be able to garner a spot in this team, this Du Ya must have a certain specialty somewhere!

En, as of now, he was akin to a sheep amidst a pack of wolves. Everything must be done with caution. He could not afford to be careless or turn a blind eye to anything!

"Let us discuss about what we discovered," Seeing nobody speak up, Newton become slightly dissatisfied. "Before we came, we have already known that this time's quest is the 72 Demons Pillar Series Instance Dungeon. Could it be that none of you made any preparations? Everyone should have understood the background story of the quest, right?"

Observing the increasing dissatisfaction on Newton's eyes, Damon coughed out and spoke. "Newton, before this, Sara and I had just followed the Guild Leader to participate in another Instance Dungeon Quest. You knew just how narrow of an escape we had. After we returned from that instance, we did not even have the time to rest. Instead, we hastily accepted this Instance Dungeon. How were we supposed to find time to make preparations... Besides, isn't this just a B Class Instance Dungeon? We have completed no small amount of Instance Dungeons of a higher class. Also, amongst all the Instance Dungeon types, Resource Type Instance Dungeons are widely acknowledged as having the least amount of danger, so..."

"So you all became negligent?" Newton's face turned grim.

"Come on, Newton. To begin with, our members for this Instance Dungeon were assembled on the spur of the moment," The Pattern Man

tried to ease the atmosphere. “In addition, this Instance Dungeon is also not the guild’s most important target. Let us not stress out too much...”

“Why don’t we just pick a random passage?” Sara had produced a dagger from who knows where and was trimming her nails at the side. She said in a languid manner. “In the end, if the Quest Reward Fragment is acquired by some other team, we can just snatch it over. Even though we are not allowed to kill... we could always leave them alive. This Instance Dungeon’s class is not that high and the ones participating are just a group of trash. Which of them could be our match?”

“...” Newton did not say anything. Judging from the circumstances, he is not the number one leader in the Wind Slasher Guild and only a temporary Team Leader for this team. It would be unwise for him to keep reprimanding.

Being unable to vent out his anger, he could only turn around to look at the few people in the newbie group.

After a moment of silence...

“How about... I say a few words?”

Chen Xiaolian slowly spoke out in a calm voice.

In an instant, everyone from the Wind Slasher Guild turned their gazes onto his figure. This was especially so for Han Bi who was right beside him, his face revealing his exceptional surprise.

“Oh?” Damon looked at Chen Xiaolian and sneered. “You? What do you have to say?”

As though he had not heard the other party’s words of mockery, Chen Xiaolian slowly continued. “Did everyone realize, this underground wide-open space actually has an equilateral six sided shape? I have walked around earlier and found that each side has a length of roughly fifty steps, the minor differences could be ignored.”

“En, what about it?” Damon asked.

“Let him continue!” Newton frowned as he declared, giving Damon a

stare.

“Ahem,” Chen Xiaolian cleared his throat. “As everyone can see, it has an equilateral six sided shape. Every side has a passageway. In total there are six passageways... if we were to observe this place from the skies, we will find that this place is a big six sided star.”

This time, no one interrupted Chen Xiaolian. Newton and the other veteran team members looked around thoughtfully and confirmed that what Chen Xiaolian said was correct.

“The six sided star, also known as the hexagram. It is the iconic symbol of Judaism. And the current Instance Dungeon that we are in is ‘King Solomon’s 72 Demons’. Who is King Solomon? He is the legendary king of the Jews!

There are several nicknames in Judaism for the hexagram. It has been called ‘Solomon’s Seal’ or ‘Sealed Star’.

Look, are they not connected?”

“So what if it is connected?” Du Ya seemed to be showing some hostility towards Chen Xiaolian. It was probably due to Newton’s earlier reprimand. Now that a newbie is talking eloquently, he felt his face falling. He sneered and asked. “Does this have anything to do with which way we should take?”

“Yes there is!” Chen Xiaolian replied with calmness and certainty!

Newton looked at him. “What is the connection?” He paused before adding. “If what you say is of value, I will give you a reward.”

“Thank you Team Leader,” Chen Xiaolian smiled and slowly said. “In the Jewish doctrines, there are various descriptions for the hexagram. I recall reading one which states: The six edges of the hexagram represents the six eternal existences within this world. According to some occult teachings, these six edges are given code letters of A, D, O, N, A, I. When these six letter are put together, they form the word ADONAI. In the Hebrew language, this means... God, the representation of the unity of everything in this world.”

Reaching this point, Chen Xiaolian looked around at the group and saw that everyone was looking at him and listening attentively. He then continued.

“When translated, these six corners represents: Kindness, Wickedness, Love, Hate, Life, Death.

Kindness and wickedness, love and hate, life and death – these six concepts are considered to be the absolute basic and eternal of existences within this world.

Six types of concept, which forms the six-sided star.

Using the six concepts as guide, I believe that we can select the appropriate path to go.”

Most of the surrounding members’ faces remain confused. Only Newton appeared to be deep in thought. He then looked at Chen Xiaolian, his eyes showing traces of approval and appreciation.

“You have been talking for so long, so now... this kindness and wickedness, love and hate, life and death, six concepts, six passageways... how are we to differentiate them? I have already checked them before, none of the passageways have any markings! How are we to identify which one is Kindness, which one is Wickedness, which one is Love or Hate?” The Pattern Man asked, his question did not contain any tone of mockery, rather it was filled with objectivity.

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

At this moment, the smile on his clean and clear face looked calm and relaxed.

“Indeed, I do not know which passageway is Love or Hate, nor which is Kindness... but I know which passageway we should take!

Do not forget, what is our objective for coming here?

Demon Pillar! In most legends, demons are the symbol of Hell, death... thus, to find the Demon Pillar Seal, which passageway should we take? The answer should be self-evident, right?”

“You mean to say, by choosing the ‘Death’ passageway, we will be able to find the Demon Pillar Seal!” Newton’s eyes lit up!

Sara frowned. “But, the problem remains... there are six passageways here, which passageway is the one that signify ‘Death’? There are no hints or markings upon it.”

Chen Xiaolian gave a faint smile. “Which way did we come in from then?”

It was then everyone understood!

“The passageway that took us here is also one of the passageways of the six sided star... A passageway that connects to the outside, I believe that this passageway must signify ‘Life’!

Six types of concepts, Kindness and Wickedness, Love and Hate, Life and Death. It just so happens that they are located on the opposite of one another. It signifies the opposing concepts, Kindness against Wickedness, Love against Hate, Life against Death! Since we all know that the path of Life is that way, then... the path of Death...”

“The path of Death, must certainly be located in the opposite direction of the path of ‘Life’!”

Everyone suddenly came to an understanding. At this instant, their gazes towards Chen Xiaolian had turned different.

Newton earnestly assessed Chen Xiaolian and nodded his head. In a deep voice, he said. “Not bad! It seems you have done well to prepare for this. In addition, you are also smart. A newbie like this is a promising one... en, if you can maintain this standard of performance later on, then once the quest is complete, I will recommend to the Guild Leader to make an exception and accept you as an official guild member.”

With the exception of Han Bi, the other three newbies gazed at Chen Xiaolian, traces of envy appearing within their eyes.

Chapter 17: Underground Palace

After having chosen to go down the passageway of Death, the Wind Slasher Guild no longer hesitated and began moving out.

At the very moment, some of the other players who were still around saw the choice made by the Wind Slasher Guild. They too decided to follow along. As for the Wind Slasher Guild, they paid those followers no heed. Damon, coldly smiled. "Heng, that is not a bad thing. We have more fodder to use. When the time comes, we can use them to open up a path."

As they moved onwards along the 'passageway of Death', the air around became increasingly suffocating. The appearance of the passageway remained the same, resembling the works of human hands.

Suddenly, the tactical flashlight in the hands of Newton who was walking at the very front went out.

"Damn it, it seems that the deeper we go, the higher the restriction placed onto equipment of the technological type," Newton turned around and gave the other team members a glance, shouting. "Turn off the flashlights... do not use illumination equipment of the magical type. Who knows when we may have to fight, so don't waste your strength. Use the Firefly Frogs."

Everyone quickly moved to the east and smeared the Firefly Frog secretions onto the surface of their equipment. It was not long before each of them turned into something akin to humanoid fireflies. Within this pitch-black passageway, they were particularly eye-catching. In addition, they also lit up the passageway.

Han Bi secretly observed Chen Xiaolian's actions and found that while Chen Xiaolian did smear the Firefly Frog secretions onto his protective suit... he had done so with caution. None of them came in contact with his sleeves or his clothes!

Han Bi realized something and followed suit. Chen Xiaolian watched Han Bi's actions and gave him a wink when no one was watching. Both of them exchanged a look.

“Xiao Lian (face)!”

Newton suddenly shouted out for Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian thus moved to Newton’s side.

Newton looked at him and suddenly stuffed an item into Chen Xiaolian’s hand.

“As I have said earlier, if what you spoke of is of worth, then I will reward you. As a Team Leader, I meant what I said. I saw that the weapon that you are using is still the light sabre from the Beginner’s Package; the damage of that item is too low. This weapon was acquired from somewhere else and I cannot use it. But, for a newbie like you it will be very useful. I will gift this to you as a reward.”

Chen Xiaolian lowered his head to inspect the item. In his hand was a compact looking short sword – it is shaped like a Western styled cross-shaped holy sword. However, it is too small to the point where one could just wear it across the neck as a chain...

Upon the sword is a very, very small purple coloured gem.

Seeing the pale purple gem, the few newbies at the side seemingly had their eyes bulged out. Even Damon who wields the gigantic door like sword had subconsciously looked at it again another two times. He frowned.

“First bind it with your Personal System. When you are not using it, you can place it in the Item Box or wear it on your body as an accessory. When in battle, place it in your hand and grip it tightly; it will transform into its War Form. Remember, in War Form it becomes very sharp and provides bonus power. However, there is a limit to the amount of time that it can be used as it will drain your Endurance. Once your Endurance is exhausted, it will return to this current state.”

“...Thank you,” Chen Xiaolian himself was uncertain how he was feeling at the moment and had subconsciously uttered those words.

“All right, as for the others...” Newton gave a “heng” as he looked at the other newbies. “I am someone who knows how to differentiate between

the time to reward and punish. Whoever you are, if you contribute to the team, I will reward you! Now, keep moving forward! Xiaolian, you follow beside me!”

Chen Xiaolian could not refuse and could only follow beside Newton as he walked in the vanguard position.

“It seems that Newton really values this kid,” Du Ya moved beside Sara and sneered in a low tone.

“It has been a long time since he saw a newbie with potential. This Xiaolian (face) is a silent one, but he is somewhat intelligent,” Sara closed her mouth and smiled tenderly. “Seeing someone who has potential, it is only natural that we recruit him. I am quite fond of him myself, only I wonder... how will he taste like.”

Du Ya gave Sara a glance, his heart secretly cursing **. He then moved to the side and slapped heavily onto Takashimoto Shizuka’s buttocks, laughing as he shouted. “Faster, babe! Do not dawdle!”

Chen Xiaolian who was at the front heard Seidaikono Shizuka’s sobbing sounds, but fought the urge to look back.

...

Finally, the passageway seemingly came to an end and a circular shaped cavern door appeared before them.

Entering through it, everyone found that they were in another wide-open space!

This time around, the wide-open space seemed to be a huge underground palace. Looking upward, they found that the length between the stone ceiling and the ground was several tens of metres! Looking around, this wide-open space that was as big as a football stadium was dark and empty!

It was only at the very distant end that one could spot something resembling a door. Behind the door was a glimmering light – this made it particularly striking amidst the darkness.

Everywhere within this large hall area was densely covered with pillars.

Judging by its appearance, these pillars had been around for years. As for its location, there was no pattern to its placement, seemingly having one in the east and another in the west. There was no symmetry in them. In addition, some were intact while others had already deteriorated away and were partially collapsed.

Chen Xiaolian sniffed about with his nose and felt that the air here was filled with an indescribable odour of decay that caused him to become uncomfortable.

“There is something wrong here! Everyone be careful!”

Under Newton’s directive, the Wind Slasher Guild slowed down their movement speed.

The other players who were lazing about at the back also gradually caught up to them.

There were also others who were of greater courage. These people tried moving before the Wind Slasher Guild from the side. Seeing that the Wind Slasher Guild did not attempt to obstruct them, they quickened their pace.

“A bunch of fools, I love these type of idiotic voluntary scouts the most,” Sara sneered.

“Du Ya!” Newton shouted. Du Ya instantly understood Newton’s intention and summoned out his pet.

An entirely black-coloured crow, with a body mass equivalent to that of a small animal, claws curved like a hook and its pair of eyes bloody red in colour came to perch down on Du Ya’s arm.

Du Ya nudged his arms and the crow flew off. It circled around in the air at a low altitude before moving off and disappearing amidst the dense stone pillars.

A moment later, Du Ya called out in a low voice. “Newton! There is a situation!”

It was unknown what method Du Ya had utilized, but he managed to project out his personal system's radar screen. Before the surrounding crowd, a clear three-dimensional projection appeared. Upon the computer sized radar screen, the Wind Slasher Guild was the central point with ten green dots and two yellow dots, the Japanese flight attendant and Soo Soo.

In the distance...

In their surroundings, a dense cluster of red dots appeared upon the radar screen! The red dots were so numerous it had become connected with one another to the point where the singular dots could no longer be differentiated!

"Prepare for battle!"

Newton tensed up and cried out in a low voice. Following that, the members of the team began tensing up as well.

Damon gripped onto door like gigantic sword with both hands, Sara retrieved her compound bow, nocking five arrows at the same time. As for Du Ya, he produced in each hands a... gun?

As for Pattern Man, he narrowed his eyes, both his hands gripping onto a crescent shaped scimitar each.

Amongst the group of newbies, Mediterranean produced a shield. However, the edges of the shield was obviously lined with sharp steel – who knows where this newbie managed to get his hands on this type of strange weapon.

Skinny Female and Han Bi gripped onto the same type of light sabre that Chen Xiaolian had formerly used.

What was most fascinating was the Tribal Warrior. As an European male with bear like stature... the weapon he was holding turned out to be a long and narrow katana?

"Be careful! The speed of those things are fast! Three hundred more metres! Anticipated time of contact, 20 seconds!"

Du Ya immediately announced in a loud voice.

Clearly, the crow was his War Pet. In addition, this War Pet must have been equipped with a certain ability for reconnaissance and shared vision with its owner.

At this moment, sounds of shock and misery came out from before them!

The unknown team that had ventured off before the Wind Slasher Guild had become the first to receive the incoming attacks!

The veteran members of Wind Slasher Guild instantly showed a tacit understanding of one another and formed a circular formation with their backs against one another... however, this action brought forth an unexpected result. It seemed they had subconsciously abandoned the group of newbies.

The group of newbies did not have the veterans' level of tacit understanding. After the circular formation was formed, Chen Xiaolian found that the others had ended up on the outside of the circular formation. He was the only exception.

In his case, he had been following Newton all this time. Thus, when the formation was complete, he just happen to be placed behind Newton.

Unexpectedly, Takashimoto Shizuka and Soo Soo were also there together with Chen Xiaolian.

At this moment, Du Ya seemingly found something through his War Pet. His face suddenly changed and he shouted out loudly. "Be careful! The monsters are Demon Soldiers! Lots and lots of them!"

Du Ya shared out a three-dimensional projection, this was clearly his pet crow's field of vision.

Upon the screen, groups of monsters with short stature, wearing tattered armour and holding onto various types of weapons swarmed forward. Tusks protruded from each of their faces, painting a terrifying and violent image of beasts. Their movements were violent and agile, jumping even as they ran. With an apelike manner, they would jump back and forth upon the pillars within the hall!

The most critical part was that... upon the screen, their numbers... were simply outrageously high!

Chapter 18: Complete Extermination of Newbies

The vanguard team of players could be seen putting on a posture of opposition, only to be immediately engulfed by the sea of Demon Soldiers! The battle was joined!

Of the players, the tallest one was brandishing dual swords, their sharp edges flashing with wanton abandon, filled with might and momentum. He brought up the vanguard, and cleaved apart several Demon Soldiers with his swords in just a few moments. These monsters' bodies were not very resilient. After being cleaved apart, a viscous green coloured liquid sprayed out while their bodies, limbs, flesh and even internal organs flew about in every which way!

Chen Xiaolian who was suddenly faced with this sight nearly puked out blood!

As for the two females, the Japanese flight attendant and Soo Soo, a momentary glance rendered them unconscious.

The dual wielding player was clearly the one taking up the heaviest burden for the team, resembling a great resilient dam standing at the front. At this time however, some Demon Soldiers would occasionally jump over from the top.

In that instant, a wand-holding player suddenly slammed the wand down onto the ground!

In a flash, a mass of silver coloured flames burst forth! Tens of Demon Soldiers were caught by the silver-coloured flames; they immediately screamed out in misery! Caught amidst the whitish flames, they were transformed into ashes!

Another player, with a thin and small frame lost his weapon after hacking down roughly four Demon Soldiers. A Demon Soldier that was lying on the ground then viciously stabbed through his thigh. The player screamed out in pain and suddenly transformed! His originally thin and

small body suddenly transformed into a big raging bear with a height of several metres!

Its body was still equipped with metal armour!

This violent bear warrior suddenly became a target, attracting the Demon Soldiers towards him. Countless Demon Soldiers howled as they charged at him, seven or eight Demon Soldiers were piled onto his massive frame. However, the bear's strength was amazing, it caught one of the Demon Soldiers with its paws. Then, with a pull, it tore the Demon Soldier in half, causing its broken limbs and internal organs to burst out!

The power behind those paws was even more terrifying, capable of killing off around eight of those Demon Soldiers with just a few swipes. Soon however, the Demon Soldiers numbers began showing its effect as the number of Demon Soldiers on the bear's body increased. They held onto short knives and stabbed into the cracks between his armour! The screams from the bear warrior turned increasingly miserable...

It was not long before even more Demon Soldiers appeared, enveloping the entire team...

"They will not be able to hold," Newton coldly said. "They are just a disorderly mob."

"Damn it! This is clearly a B Class Resource Instance Dungeon, one with the least amount of danger! How could these formidable Demon Soldiers appear here?" Sara muttered angrily.

"Don't talk nonsense... something is not right! Careful up top!" As he was talking, Newton's face suddenly changed greatly!

At this moment, a mass of viscous liquid suddenly dropped down from above them. It dropped directly onto the Korean loli, Soo Soo's body. The mass of viscous liquid was green in colour, resembling snot.

Soo Soo had originally lost consciousness. However, she woke up the instant the liquid came in contact with her body. Opening her eyes, she looked upwards and saw a monster with slender body situated two metres away!

This monster has the same looking head as the Demon Soldiers. However, both its palms were gripping deep into the pillar. Its body was bent in a peculiar manner, akin to a lizard... a long tongue extended out... reaching down at them!

“Son of a bitch! A Stealth Hound Demon!” Newton cursed loudly and the circular formation was immediately dispersed.

Soo Soo stared with wide-open eyes at the long red tongue heading towards her. In that moment, she forgot to cry...

During this time, the one standing closest to her was only Chen Xiaolian!

Chen Xiaolian cursed inwardly. There was no time to consider anything at a time like this; he charged forward, clasp onto Soo Soo. After that, the both of them rolled onto the ground like a ball!

Before he could get up, he felt his foot being gripped. A red tongue had rolled itself onto his ankle.

What followed was an enormous yanking force, seemingly aimed at pulling him up!

Chen Xiaolian's body flew up into the air. Suddenly, he gripped onto the cross-shaped holy sword given by Newton. The cross-shaped holy sword expanded, over one metre in length, its sharp edges swept out. A mass of blood sprayed out from the tongue that was cut off by the sharp sword

Chen Xiaolian fell heavily onto the ground. He could feel his forehead smashing heavily down the hard ground! In an instant, blood flowed down his eyes and face!

At the same time, the Stealth Hound Demon quickly climbed down the pillar, retracting its tongue while doing so. However, its sharp mouth sprayed out blood, directed at Chen Xiaolian!

“Kill it!”

Newton roared!

A gigantic door like sword obstructed the Hound Demon, its sharp edge

hurtling horizontally towards the demon, slashing towards its head. Damon struck out without hesitation!

The Hound Demon's body was incredibly flexible. It twisted a little and slithered back to the top of the pillar, rapidly moving away, jumping towards another pillar. It moved far away, retreating...

This monster clearly possesses a high level of intellect. Once its attack failed, it immediately pulled back.

"Do not bother with it! Deal with the Demon Soldiers first! They are here!"

Du Ya shouted out.

Du Ya had one knee on the ground, the guns equipped in both his hands had begun firing. Each time he fired, he would take aim with the other gun, taking turns to aim with each.

Bang! Bang! The two guns continuously fired out. Amongst the demons soldiers that ran forward into their field of vision, two of them screamed out as they fell over.

The guns could not be fired in succession, but Du Ya's performance at this moment was an eye-opener for Chen Xiaolian!

The metal bracers on this guy's wrist was actually arranged with grooves, each filled with bullets. As he fired a shot, one hand was replenishing ammo, both hands rotating... his actions done in cohesion, simply astonishing! The guns could clearly only fire out one bullet, but in his hands, it became capable of consecutive shots!

At this moment, a sharp scream came from above! A Demon Soldier that had jumped over using the pillars suddenly shouted loudly and jumped over through the air even though there were still tens of metres between them...

Soo!

A sharp arrow penetrated through its body, causing it to burst into a bloody green flower in the middle of the air!

Sara pursed her mouth, her body maintaining the same posture of nocking arrows. Her hand movements were fast and the five arrows that were within her hands were all shot out in succession! The arrows were not shot in vain; for each arrow released, a Demon Soldier that was jumping along the pillars would fall!

But what had surprised Chen Xiaolian was the arrow quiver hanging from Sara's thigh. It had originally carried only tens of arrows. However, every time that Sara pulled out five arrows with her hand... the arrows within the quiver would seemingly refill itself!

Newton's abilities were also revealed. As expected, his ability is of the technological type.

Chen Xiaolian watched as Newton quickly summoned a row of metal shields before the team. The shields' design screamed out technology, forming a wall of shield! Above it was a notch that would allow projectiles to shoot out.

The Demon Soldiers charging at the front slammed into the shield wall and were immediately washed with a high amount of blue electrical current and repelled. By the time they fell onto the ground, they were already burnt to crisp!

The shape of the shield wall was not flat, but rather a three dimensional circle. It was exactly enough for the veteran members of Wind Slasher Guild to fit inside, like a bunker.

Observing that some of the Demon Soldiers were getting close, the military like bunker produced several miniature types of gun barrels. Following the sounds of "tutututu", the gun barrel poured out flames and bullets at the sea of Demon Soldiers!

The Demon Soldiers at the front were lifted off their feet by the impact of the barrage, while others had their bodies torn apart!

Witnessing all this caused Chen Xiaolian to be greatly shocked!

This ability is simply a fortress!

A war fortress!

It is simply the perfect skill to clear off weak mobs!

Of the closest incoming Demon Soldiers, practically several sides had its aggression flattened directly!

However, the face of Newton, who was standing on one side, was turning increasingly ugly!

“This won’t do! This place restricts the power of technological type skills! The level of consumption of my ‘War Fortress’ is at least five times higher than normal! Its power has also been reduced by half!”

“Damon, Du Ya, you guys deal with the ground forces! I will take care of the top!” Sara’s hands moved without stopping as her mouth called out quickly.

The Pattern Man had also begun taking action.

Although Sara was continuously releasing arrows at an extreme level of speed, the Demon Soldiers jumping down from the top was increasing in number. In the end, they were not something that a mere archer can block off.

Occasionally, a few of the Demon Soldiers would slip past and jump into the War Fortress. Pattern Man would then act to shut down this threat. Moving quickly, he struck down those monsters who managed to charge in through their defences.

The scimitars in Pattern Man’s hands were very sharp and he was very skilled in using both scimitars. With his amazing sword skills, every time his scimitars crossed paths, a Demon Soldier would be instantly cut into two!

As the veteran members of the Wind Slasher Guild fought on, the more adept they became at coordinating their skills. Soon, they suppressed the Demon Soldiers assault!

“Hahaha!” Sara laughed out in a low voice. “I love this type of scenery! Each Demon Soldier is worth one point! Kill more, let’s earn more here!”

“Stop joking around! My War Fortress cannot hold on for too long. We

have to think of a way to get out of here as soon as possible!”

Newton gritted his teeth.

As the veterans were in the middle of chatting...

The group of newbies who were abandoned on the outside were suffering from a huge disaster!

The group of newbies were hiding behind the War Fortress. However, a growing number of Demon Soldiers saw that they were unable to break through the War Fortress and instead moved to execute a pincer attack.

There was no cohesion between the newbies and they were thus thrown into a bitter battle!

The most unfortunate of them was Mediterranean. He brandished the huge shield in his hand, which acted like a huge windmill as the sharp edges of the shield rotated about. Any Demon Soldier that got too close was shredded to pieces!

Green flesh and organs sprayed all over the ground! Eventually, the ground turned slippery.

Then, Mediterranean seemingly lost his temper and begun bellowing curses continuously as he wielded the shield.

It was at this moment when he was unprepared that the Stealth Hound Demon that had escaped earlier suddenly approached in silence without them realizing. It suddenly fell from the skies and slammed down onto the very centre of the shield! The forceful impact threw Mediterranean down onto the ground! He cried out miserably but was unable to even react before a bloody mouth bit down onto his head! In an instant, half his head was bitten off!

Brain matter, flesh, blood and a damaged eyeball fell out!

Skinny Woman and Han Bi had at some unknown time moved to stand back to back, the light sabres in their hands desperately resisting the Demon Soldiers attacks.

However, the damage of the light sabre was truly inadequate. The

seemingly damaged weapons wielded by the Demon Soldiers required two to three attacks from the light sabre to cut through!

As a result, for the both of them, killing a Demon Soldier would require at least three to four moves each. This rate of efficiency is extremely low! But, more Demon Soldiers would charge forward. Suddenly, they were left with only enough space to parry. The Skinny Woman suffered from a slash and was no longer able to move her arm.

With the memories of the other party as his guiding schoolteacher for this trip, Han Bi could not help but want to help her. He attempted to pull her over to his back. Suddenly, the Skinny Woman screamed out miserably, her body faltered and she fell to the ground!

On the ground lied a Demon Soldier who had its legs cut. It viciously laughed in a sharp tone, its claws latching onto the Skinny Woman's pair of legs. It then pulled her, quickly pulling her away from Han Bi's area of reach before charging upon her ruthlessly.

Skinny Woman only had enough time to push away one before six Demon Soldiers instantly charged onto her! A miserable shriek rang out and torn limbs were then strewn all over the place...

The pressure on Han Bi increased!

The Tribal Warrior newbie turned out to have quite the character. The long and narrow katana in his hands was flying up and down through the air, his skill with the katana surprisingly proficient. In just a moment, both his front and back were littered with around eight Demon Soldiers, their bodies sliced apart.

The Tribal Warrior heard the Skinny Woman's scream and turned his head to see Han Bi fighting alone. He quickly rushed over, with a slash he cleaved apart a Demon Soldier who was already upon Han Bi's back. He then grabbed Han Bi and threw him upwards with all his might. His one throw had tossed Han Bi directly into the confines of the War Fortress!

After that, he bent his knees, squatted and fiercely jumped into the air! His body soared through the skies!

It was obvious that his aim was the inner confines of the War Fortress as well...

Halfway though, a thin shadow suddenly slithered over! It directed a bite at Tribal Warrior's shoulder in the middle of the air!

This man whose body was as robust as a bear uttered a painful roar!

The Stealth Hound Demon had struck again!

Tribal Warrior fell heavily onto the ground far away and a group of Demon Soldiers swarmed towards him. Soon, his figure was submerged...

As of now, with the exception of the two unauthorized entrants, the Wind Slasher Guild's group of newbies have been completely exterminated!

Chapter 19: Xiaolian's Brilliance

Han Bi personally witnessed the Tribal Warrior, who had helped him, end up in the grip of the Stealth Hound Demon. When the Tribal Warrior fell to the ground, he could not help but cry out, a complicated look etched on his face!

At this time, Chen Xiaolian had already put Soo Soo aside. Due to the fall earlier though, his head was bleeding and half his face was covered with blood.

"Han Bi!" Chen Xiaolian shouted out loud. "Are you all right?"

"I can still move," Han Bi gritted his teeth and looked at Chen Xiaolian's bloodied face, his own face looking somewhat dazed.

"Be careful!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly rushed over, pressing Han Bi's head down!

A damaged sword flew over his head. It turned out that the Demon Soldiers outside the enclosure had observed that they were unable to break through, thus they launched the weapons within their hands over towards them!

"I will give you my light sabre!" Chen Xiaolian held onto Han Bi and shoved the light sabre into his hand. He gritted his teeth and whispered. "If there is an opportunity, run! Remember to not head back!"

"...What? Forward still?"

Chen Xiaolian did not have any time to explain.

Because at this moment, he could hear Newton's voice.

"I cannot hold on anymore, retreat! Retreat using the same path back!"

Newton continued. "Damon, make a path! I will guard the rear! The others stay in the middle; Sara and Du Ya take care of the skies! Let's go!"

He had Damon take the responsibility of opening a path, while he took the most dangerous rear-guard position – from this, it could be observed that Newton was a qualified Team Leader.

However, his following words caused Chen Xiaolian to become worried.

“Toss those 2 NPCs to the back to attract the Demon Soldiers attention! We can gain at least a few seconds! Hurry!”

Chen Xiaolian did not have any time to think, he only blurted out. “No!”

“Idiot! What did you say?”

Pattern Man kicked Chen Xiaolian to the ground, the cold edges of his scimitar rested atop Chen Xiaolian’s neck. Pattern Man brutally lashed out. “Do not think that being a little bit smart allows you to disregard the rules!”

Newton stared at Chen Xiaolian, he too violently snapped. “Just what is wrong with you? Xiaolian! Back then, for the sake of saving a NPC, you end up crashing on your head! Now you cannot even turn them to bait!”

Within Newton’s gaze, sparks of suspicions could clearly be seen.

Chen Xiaolian did not bother explaining, he quickly shouted aloud. “I have a method to deal with these Demon Soldiers! We do not need baits! In addition, we cannot retreat! We can only go forward!”

“Ignore him, he is lying!”

Damon cleaved a Demon Soldier that had jumped in and slammed his foot down its head, pulverizing it to pieces. He glared at Chen Xiaolian. “There is a problem with this kid!”

Chen Xiaolian simply stared at Newton. “Trust me!”

Newton forcefully gritted his teeth. “Ten seconds! If you cannot spit it out, then I will kill you on the spot!”

“You must have explosive type items! Look at the locations of the surrounding pillars!” Chen Xiaolian only used those two sentences to convince Newton!

Others may not be able to understand instantly, but Newton could. Because Chen Xiaolian had already confirmed that Newton’s abilities, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that his fighting abilities are those that follow the path of technology. To be even more precise, it is of

the military technology type.

At the very least, this man's military accomplishment must certainly be superior when compared to the other team members.

The pillars within this great hall are everywhere. In addition, their locations appeared to be irregular, even messy. However, someone with exceptional military qualities would still be able to pinpoint the points of support and the points of failure.

In other words, by blowing up certain pillars, it would be possible to destroy the point of supports, leading to a collapse!

Due to the restriction on technology type skills and weapons, when faced against the attacks of the flood like number of Demon Soldiers, cold weapons had to be used. However, cold weapons are lacking in efficiency when 'clearing mobs'.

Under such circumstances, the choice of creating explosions in the main hall to cause a collapse may bring about the biggest amount of damage to the Demon Soldiers.

Moreover, when the hall collapses, not only would it kill the Demon Soldiers, it could also effectively create obstacles and slow down the movements of the other Demon Soldiers.

As for why Chen Xiaolian had proposed to "move forward, we cannot retreat", even if others were unable to understand, Newton had reacted instantly.

Considering the Wind Slasher Guild's current location, if a straight line was to be drawn between the entrance and exit position for the great hall, they would find that they have already crossed two thirds the length of this line.

That is to say, the distance between them and the exit was closer! If they were to retreat towards the entrance, the distance that they needed to travel was longer.

... In just an instant, he thought of a method to contain the Demon Soldiers. In addition, he also accurately determined the topography and

locations. And this ability to make such a courageous plan to move onwards...

Such a state of mind, intellect and ability to respond...

Newton stared at Chen Xiaolian with a very complicated expression.

“Follow his plans!”

Newton made his decision, the other team members instantly turned to look at Chen Xiaolian with an expression of surprise.

“Several points needed to be blown up... I alone would not suffice,” Newton coldly looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“It is my suggestion, it is only natural that I will participate,” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath, his face solemn.

Newton then revealed a trace of surprise in his face. “It is very dangerous; there is a probability of death. We will not be able to protect you.”

Chen Xiaolian maintained the same expression and nodded.

“...” Newton gritted his teeth. “Sara! Du Ya! I need 30 seconds!”

Sara bit her lips. “Very well! I will trust you this once, Newton.”

Du Ya did not say anything and only grunted.

The two of them immediately reassumed their battle positions, Sara used her bow and arrows to clear the Demon Soldiers jumping towards them from the air while Du Ya’s guns begun to rang out once again.

Newton raised his head, quickly assessing the surrounding location of the pillars before making the calculations within his mind.

“Four points of explosion, no less,” Newton calculated at an extremely rapid rate. “I will take care of two points of explosion; two other people will be needed for the other two points of explosion.”

“I have said it before, I will do it,” Chen Xiaolian coldly replied.

“I will do it too,” Pattern Man cracked a grin as he sneered at Chen Xiaolian.

“Good! The rest will be responsible for providing cover. Damon! Xiaolian’s strength is the weakest, you will be responsible for protecting him as he sets up the explosives.”

Damon grunted in a somewhat annoyed manner.

“The others get ready, 20 seconds later my War Fortress will be removed.”

Newton spoke out; he quickly produced a long chain of metal ores.

“These are bombs. This place restricts technological type equipment, making it so I cannot utilize energy type bombs. These are old-fashioned chain series cluster bombs. Due to how the strength of technology have been weakened by at least half, the amount needed to be increased by one fold to achieve the desired effect.”

Newton quickly assigned the tasks. “The four points of explosions are...”

He clarified each of the positions and confirmed it with them. He quickly proceeded. “On each points of explosion, tie up two chains of bombs. I have already set up the activation procedures, once it is pressed, it will explode in 10 seconds... Therefore, you must run as soon as possible after you finish binding the chain of bombs. Everyone is to run towards the exit together! Sara, Du Ya, bring the two NPCs together! I will make one last confirmation, any questions?”

No one said anything.

“Good... The removal time for the War Fortress is down to five seconds... prepare to move! Five, four, three...”

Once Newton counted down to zero, the War Fortress that had been constantly protecting them suddenly turned into a beam of green light and disappeared.

“Charge together!”

Newton roared loudly, being the first to leap forward through the air. His stalwart figure flying through the air was like an incoming storm!

The ‘point of explosion’ that Chen Xiaolian was assigned to was located

roughly ten metres to the left of the forward direction. He placed the two chains of bombs across his neck and ran forward with all his might. Both his hands were gripping onto the cross shaped holy sword. Just as he had emerged from the circle of shelter, a Demon Soldier had appeared before him. Without any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian slashed down with his sword! The Demon Soldier's head was split open, green blood spurting onto Chen Xiaolian's face.

The nauseating feeling of stickiness nearly caused him to puke out.

However, now was not the time to worry about that. Chen Xiaolian rushed forward madly, taking big strides each. His eyes were fixed upon his target objective, the pillar. At this moment, two Demon Soldiers charged forth and were right on Chen Xiaolian's heels. Damon who was following Chen Xiaolian to provide cover lashed out. The gigantic sword slashed out repeatedly, causing two streaks of light to burst out and suddenly, the Demon Soldiers were split apart.

10 metres... 8 metres... 3 metres...

Chen Xiaolian threw himself onto the base of the pillar. He immediately removed the chain of bombs around his neck and had them placed upon the pillar. The chain of bombs possessed magnetic properties of sort and attached themselves onto the base of the pillar. Just as this process was completed, Chen Xiaolian suddenly heard a gust of wind behind him!

He subconsciously ducked his head, but felt a terrible pain searing both his shoulders!

Chen Xiaolian was directly thrown out! Turning back, he saw the Stealth Hound Demon moving towards him with wide-open mouth!

"Damon!"

Chen Xiaolian subconsciously called out for Damon who was supposed to be covering him. However, when he raised his head, he found that Damon had already run away, some tens of metres lied between them! This guy had even turned around to sneer at him – he brought up his left thumb and performed a throat slitting action!

The bastard!

Son of a bitch!

Chen Xiaolian did not have enough time think, he rolled forward on the spot. The Hound Demon charged up right behind him, its long tongue rapidly rolling out towards him... Although part of its tongue had been cut off, the remainder was still considerably long.

The sticky tongue rolled itself onto Chen Xiaolian's leg in a flash and a great force yanked him backwards. Chen Xiaolian shouted out loudly, and thrust the cross-shaped holy sword into the ground. Both his hands held on tightly onto the sword hilt as his body was suddenly pulled straight up to face the skies.

At this time, a sound rang out from the distance.

"Hold on!"

After which, a burst of intense gunfire followed. "Peng! Peng! Peng!"

Newton was rushing over. He had at an unknown time finished his own task, his entire body covered with green mucus and chunks. With one hand, he held onto a military sabre while his other held a gun . As he was running towards Chen Xiaolian, he shot without stopping.

A few bullets struck the Stealth Hound Demon, but the bullets were unable to penetrate its tough skin. All it did was leave some green coloured wounds. It roared and immediately retreated, its figure quickly climbing up the pillar, hiding itself within the darkness.

"Hurry up and run!" Newton shouted, but Chen Xiaolian tumbled up and ran towards the pillar.

"Are you crazy?!"

"The detonation button had not been pressed!" Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly.

After pressing down the detonation button, Chen Xiaolian turned around and was about to run. However, Newton had already rushed to his side. Tossing away the military sabre in his hand, he single-handedly

grabbed Chen Xiaolian and placed him onto his shoulders before bolting off with big strides...

The two of them rushed out madly even as Demon Soldiers continuously charged towards them. In the distance, Sara had already turned around. This godlike archer released her mighty arrows in succession. Her arrows blasted the Demon Soldiers who were blocking the way; Newton himself was shooting madly until his gun ran out of bullets. He then fiercely smashed it towards a distant Demon Soldier.

“Time is up... hurry up and run!!”

Just as the words rang out...

Boom!!!

A loud noise reverberated out from one of the pillar that acted as a point of explosion. Orange coloured flames and intense shock waves burst out, causing the pillar to suddenly break apart before crashing down! A considerable number of Demon Soldiers that were right below it screamed as the fallen pillar fragments fell heavily down upon them!

Subsequently, the second sound of explosion... the third...

Boom boom boom...

All four points of explosions had been set off!

The massive amount of flames, smoke, rumblings and the shockwaves resulting from the explosions had seemingly transformed into an unrestrained storm!

Even though Chen Xiaolian and Newton had ran off with an insane level of speed, they were unable to escape the incoming shockwaves. Chen Xiaolian felt himself and Newton being thrown into the air by the shockwave, they were directly thrown far off towards the front!

As Newton landed, he made a roll and immediately got up. Chen Xiaolian, on the other hand, only felt a “kacha” coming off his left foot! A heart piercing pain!

He could clearly see his own left ankle twisted up at an unbelievable

angle!

Just as he was screaming out miserably, Newton remained faithful to his role as a Team Leader; he grabbed onto Chen Xiaolian's hair and pulled it as he ran forward!

It was then that a thunderous sound of movement came from up above their heads, followed by the descent of countless dust from the ceiling. The entire hall was faintly trembling...

"It is going to collapse! If you do not want to get buried alive then run!" Newton roared.

Boom!

Huge blocks of stones started falling down one after another from the ceiling!

The Demon Soldiers below appeared to be shocked, they then screamed and begun fleeing in all directions. However, more of those rocks began to fall down. Chen Xiaolian who was being dragged by Newton personally witnessed an entire ceiling fragment the size of a basketball court falling down! This incident caused at least a hundred Demon Soldiers to be crushed to death!

The collapse triggered a chain reaction, leading to more pillars cracking and breaking down, eventually causing an even bigger area to collapse!

The Wind Slasher Guild members ran with wanton abandon!

Newton himself was bolting madly!

As for Chen Xiaolian... he still had his hair grabbed by Newton as he ran, dragging him along the ground...

The collapsing area spread out behind them, becoming increasingly large as the distance between them started closing up. The rocks that had fallen down from the collapsing rubble appeared to be chasing after everyone's asses...

Finally...

A dust-filled gale enveloped them. Newton then pulled up Chen

Xiaolian and the both of them charged forward together... Together, they charged through the gleaming exit at the end of the hall!

Boom!!

A large rock fell down, followed by even more of them. In just an instant, the exit was blocked!

Chen Xiaolian saw a Demon Soldier that had been chasing behind him finally making it towards the exit. Unfortunately for it, the rocks came smashing down on it... after the exit was blocked off, the demon's claw could be seen extending outwards from the gaps in the rubble...

1 In the Qidian raws, the military sabre is actually written as **. I assume it to be a military sabre because it was mentioned later on that Newton was holding one. No idea why it became **... Raw: '他一手拿着把**, 一手持枪'.

Chapter 20: I Cannot Do It

Chen Xiaolian turned over his body as he lied on the ground; the intense pain on his leg caused him to be unable to stand up. He first glanced around to search for Han Bi. After seeing Han Bi standing together with Sara and Takashimoto Shizuka and Soo Soo being safely held on by Du Ya and Pattern Man respectively... he felt his heart easing up.

Han Bi directed a complicated gaze at Chen Xiaolian. He hesitated and chose not to move over.

They were in a stone chamber. Although the place was dark, there were some fragments of pearl like items affixed upon the ceiling. They emitted a faint light.

The stone chamber was not big and another stone door lied to the side.

"Everyone is still alive, right?" Newton sat on the ground, brushing off the dust on his body.

"We are all alive," Sara moved over and helped Newton up. "But it truly was dangerous. We were nearly buried alive. The kid's plan was too dangerous."

"But it was a success. The danger was caused by someone doing something they should not have done! That caused an error to occur in the timing of explosions."

Newton's face suddenly turned dark. He abruptly walked before Damon; he raised his hand and slapped Damon in the face!

Pa!

A deep and clear sound rang out!

The slap caused Damon to stumble backwards. In anger, he raised his gigantic sword.

"What, are you thinking of slashing me to death?" Newton remained immobile and simply looked at Damon coldly.

Damon's complexion turned red; he wheezed as he breathed heavily.

Finally, he gritted his teeth and released the sword.

“The reason I beat you is because you disobeyed my orders. In addition, you did something you should not have done!” Newton violently lashed out. “I assigned you to provide cover for Xiaolian while he sets up the explosives. When you saw him being attacked by the Stealth Hound Demon, why did you run away? If not for me saving him, he would have no time to press the detonation button! He was able to thanks to my help! Even so, an error had occurred in the timing of explosions! The direction of the collapse spread beyond my estimation and all of us were nearly buried alive!”

After saying that, Newton suddenly delivered a kick towards Damon’s stomach. The kick threw Damon aside, a mouthful of blood spraying out from his mouth.

“I need an explanation!” Newton did not simply let this matter slide.

“He is an eyesore to me; I just want to kill him,” Damon forcefully wiped his mouth. “In addition, I suspect his origins! This guy could potentially be an ‘Awakened!’”

Awakened?

Hearing this strange term, Chen Xiaolian’s mind was filled with doubts. However, it was clear that to the members of the Wind Slasher Guild, the term Awakened is not a welcomed name. In addition, the other team members too eyed Chen Xiaolian with eagle like gazes!

Newton’s face turned severe, he restrained his fury. “You... do you have evidence?”

“None, so far I have only been suspecting,” Damon coldly replied. “But I have reasons to be suspicious.”

“State your reasons,” Newton spoke in a hoarse voice.

“Back then, for the sake of saving a little girl who is a NPC he ended up getting wounded. This level of concern, is it not suspicious?” Damon sneered. “Also, his suggestion to use explosions to trigger the collapse, the idea is certainly good... however, I believe that the reason he

suggested it was to stop us from using the two NPCs as bait. That is why he suggested the plan – he only wanted to protect the two NPCs.”

“This is not enough to confirm it,” Newton replied with indifference. “It is only your speculation.”

“Hmph, Newton, you yourself should be clear on whether my words are logical or not,” Damon sneered.

Beside them, Pattern Man, Sara and Du Ya had strange looks on their faces. Pattern Man slowly said. “Newton, I feel that the things Damon said are indeed suspicious. Who would let themselves get hurt to save a little girl who is a NPC?”

Newton grunted, he turned around and stared at Chen Xiaolian who was on the ground. “Xiaolian, I will give you a fair chance to defend yourself. Why did you want to save the little girl?”

“...” Chen Xiaolian thought about it, and then sighed before smiling bitterly. “If I say... it is because I am a lolicon, would you believe me?”

... ..

...

Naturally, no one believed those words.

“Just kill him. Since he is unable to defend himself, better to unjustly kill than to not kill. Besides, he is just a newbie,” The one who spoke out was Du Ya who sneered at Chen Xiaolian.

Newton’s face remained still, his expression solemn, not speaking up at all.

“Actually, there is another reason to suspect him,” Damon slowly said after pondering. “From the very first time we brought him into our camp, I have had this suspicion. When Sara was introducing our team, she told him that our team is the Wind Slasher Guild. This guy did not show any reaction at all. Heng! Even though our Wind Slasher Guild is not a top-level team, we could still be considered famous. For a newbie to be able to enter Wind Slasher Guild, even if they are only the temporary members,

they should show some reaction, right? However, after hearing our guild's name, he did not even bat an eyelid. Moreover... when Sara revealed that you are called Newton, this guy also remained calm, as though the name he heard was Dick or Paul.

Heng! For a newbie, would these actions not cause any suspicion?"

Chen Xiaolian's mind was stunned!

He finally realized where his initial flaws were!

He ended up exposing himself after all!

Clearly, by observing the Wind Slasher Guild's actions within this instance dungeon and the attitude shown by the other players, one would be able to make a conclusion: Within their world, this Wind Slasher Guild has some amount of status and fame.

As for him... a minor newbie, to suddenly be able to join a team with such a status, his expression then was simply too indifferent.

When you are aware that a big celebrity with thunderous reputation is standing right before you, you would definitely reveal some traces of surprise.

"But... his level of strength is too poor," Sara could not resist. "Could there be such a weak Awakened?"

"Perhaps he is a newbie Awakened," Damon replied coldly. "I agree with Du Ya, better to unjustly kill than to not kill. Even if this is an unjust kill, he is but a newbie."

Newton finally opened his mouth.

He looked at his team members. "Do you all agree? Kill him?"

None of them replied. But the meaning behind this action was clearly that of a silent agreement.

"I just want to remind everyone something... earlier, Damon intentionally brought harm to him. However, he still turned back to press the detonation button! If not for that, our plan would have failed! All of us may have ended up being buried alive!"

“From this point of view, this kid could be considered our saviour.”

Newton said in a slow and sombre tone.

“Newton,” Sara suddenly gave a light smile. “You keep speaking out for this kid time and again... do you really value this newbie so much? But if he is an Awakened... when we return how do we explain this to the Guild Leader?”

“I have no need to explain myself to anyone,” Newton scoffed.

“... or perhaps, you still have lingering emotions? We all know about how you once fell in love with an Awakened. Thus... could it be that you are still holding on to the ridiculous mind-set, which shows compassion to those Awakened folks?”

Sara’s words had seemingly pierced Newton’s sensitive spot.

Newton’s complexion turned red, he growled like an angry leopard and rushed forward. With one hand, he gripped Sara’s neck, lifting her high into the air before heavily slamming her onto the wall!

Bang!

Sara screamed sharply in pain. “You, you have gone mad! Newton!”

She moved her hands about as she struggled with all her might, but Newton’s hands was as tough as steel.

At long last, Newton slowly regained his senses and loosened his grip. Sara then fell to the ground and coughed continuously.

“... I had indeed fallen in love with an Awakened! However, I had personally killed that person in the end! Remember, if someone dares mention that incident again... I will kill that someone!”

Newton ruthlessly spoke out, a murderous aura billowing off him!

He abruptly moved to Chen Xiaolian’s side and looked at Chen Xiaolian in a commanding manner.

“I really do value you. You have a clever mind, reaction, courage, all of them are good! Even though your current strength is somewhat weak,

strength can be enhanced while state of mind cannot. Because of that, I think highly of you. I had even decided, after this quest is complete, I will definitely recruit you into our guild and make you an official team member. In addition, I will be giving you some opportunities and nurture you properly so that you can become a core member of our team.”

Newton’s voice showed not a shred of emotion as he coldly continued. “However, their suspicions are justified. As the Team Leader of this team, I cannot show favouritism. Even more so, I cannot tolerate having an Awakened entering our ranks! If you are an Awakened, then even though I think highly of you, I will definitely kill you!”

“Still, in order to be fair, I will give you a chance to prove yourself!”

Newton suddenly pulled out a gun and threw it before Chen Xiaolian.

He walked away and pulled Soo Soo over, ignoring the little girl’s sobbing. He then threw her towards Chen Xiaolian’s side.

Newton looked at his own team members. “Your biggest suspicion towards him is because of his attitude towards NPCs, right?”

Du Ya and Pattern Man nodded.

“Very well!” Newton lowered his head to look at Chen Xiaolian. “Xiaolian, there is a gun before you. Pick it up and kill this NPC, then I will believe that you are not an Awakened!”

“ ... ”

Chen Xiaolian was startled!

He looked at the gun placed before him...

Soo Soo’s cries turned increasingly loud, the little girl tightly gripped onto Chen Xiaolian’s clothes while her body leaned onto his figure.

Finally, Chen Xiaolian let out a sigh.

He stopped looking at the gun. Instead, he raised his head to look at Newton and gave a bitter smile.

“Well, I cannot do it.”

1 The word here is actually ‘阿猫阿狗’, pinyin: ‘āmāo’āgǒu’. It means names that are not worthy of attention.

Chapter 21: Nest

The silence at this moment was such that if a pin were to drop on the ground, everyone would be able to hear it.

Every Wind Slasher Guild member was coldly looking at Chen Xiaolian. The edges of Sara's mouth revealed traces of cruelty as she sneered. As for Damon, a murderous expression was on his face.

Newton's gaze gradually revealed a deep sense of disappointment.

"So, you really are an Awakened ..."

Chen Xiaolian's expression remained calm. He pulled the sobbing Soo Soo to his side and gently patted her hair. After that, Chen Xiaolian raised his head to look at Newton. "Truth be told, I do not even understand what you are talking about."

Newton's eyes turned completely cold.

"Just kill him."

The Pattern Man who had been the least talkative gripped his scimitar and was about to head towards Chen Xiaolian.

"Wait."

Newton extended his hand to restrain the Pattern Man's wrist.

"Newton, it can't be that you are still thinking of letting him go? Have you gone mad?" Damon violently snapped.

Newton looked at him before slowly replying. "Before we came in, there was an identity scan. Regardless of whether he is an Awakened or not, he has already entered this instance and had his identity scanned. That means he has already been incorporated into this instance dungeon's system. Amongst the three conditions within this instance dungeon, do you still remember what the last one was?"

Damon gritted his teeth while remaining silent. Sara and Du Ya turned to look at one another but remained silent as well.

Pattern Man hesitated for a moment before disrupting the silence.

“Prohibition of personal feuds between players, not allowed to kill other players, once a violation occurs, it will cause the system to dispense punishment.”

“That is right, regardless of whether or not he is an Awakened, he had already been scanned by the instance dungeon the moment he entered. Thus, he has been incorporated into the system and that means he is protected by the system’s rules. By personally killing him, one would suffer punishment... those of you who do not mind being punished by the system may act, I will not stop you.”

After Newton said those words, no one chose to act.

Sara suddenly laughed out in a tasteless tone. “In that case, all we need to do is not to personally kill him. Bring him along. When we meet monsters along the way, we will just throw him out.”

Newton looked at Sara and nodded silently.

Damon grinned widely and sneered at Chen Xiaolian. He moved to Chen Xiaolian’s side, observing the one twisted ankle and the blood on his head and face. Laughing fiercely, he suddenly raised his leg and kicked Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder!

Chen Xiaolian was directly kicked away and he ended up slamming onto the wall. As he fell, the pain caused his sight to go dark momentarily. He could clearly hear the bones on his shoulders issuing sounds of splintering!

“Depleting his fighting strength alone is not enough as insurance,” Sara smiled with squinted eyes as she moved before Chen Xiaolian.

As Chen Xiaolian was feeling puzzled, a system interface prompt suddenly appeared for him.

[Prompt, someone initiated ‘thief’ skill against you. Items lost: None].

“This kid’s item box is empty,” Sara shook her head.

She then bent down to pick up the cross-shaped holy sword in Chen Xiaolian’s hand and threw it towards Newton. Newton looked at it before

keeping it back into the system.

“Let us move, do not waste any more time,” Newton coldly said.
“Completing the quest first is more important.”

He then assigned the tasks, Soo Soo and the Japanese flight attendant would be left to Sara and Du Ya respectively. As for Chen Xiaolian... Damon had seemingly wanted to volunteer when suddenly, Han Bi who had been remaining silent opened his mouth. “I will keep an eye on him.”

Observing the team members gaze directed towards him, Han Bi spoke out in a sincere tone. “I am a newbie so I cannot contribute much in terms of battle potential. Later on, we may encounter even more dangers. It would be best if your strengths are focused on the battles. As for matters like this, just leave it to me.”

No one suspected his reasoning and Newton nodded.

Han Bi moved forward and pulled Chen Xiaolian up in a seemingly rough manner. Chen Xiaolian coughed out a mouthful of blood and saw a trace of insinuation within Han Bi's eyes.

Damon walked towards one side and forcibly pushed open the other stone gate.

Just as the gate was pushed open, a surge of cold, sinister air rushed inside. The other side was filled with darkness, devoid of any traces of light.

Damon extended his body forward and looked around before turning back and said. “There is a road.”

There was indeed a road, but the terrain there was very steep.

The stone gate led to what appeared to be an underground stone precipice. A flight of stairs extended down in the shape of a spiral.

The width of the stairs was extremely narrow, allowing a maximum of only two person to walk side by side. To one side lied the mountain walls while the other was the darkness of the cliff... due to the lack of lighting, it was not possible for them to observe what was lying below.

Even though they had applied the Firefly Frog's secretion onto their bodies, the faint radiance was only barely able to provide illumination for them. This time, Newton had Damon move together with him as vanguard. Damon did not oppose the command and moved forward with his gigantic sword held in his hand.

Du Ya and the rest were in the middle position.

Han Bi was propping Chen Xiaolian with one hand as he secretly helped to support a big part of his weight. Chen Xiaolian had to forcibly hop forward with one leg. Silently, they fell to the rear position of the team. Due to the road being narrow and the fact that there was no way back plus the serious injuries that Chen Xiaolian had suffered, no one paid any attention to it.

Only Soo Soo's sobbing sounds could be heard. She even called out "Xiaolian oppa" a few times, but after being slapped by Sara the little girl was too frightened to continue crying.

The trip down the long staircase took them close to one hour. The pain that Chen Xiaolian had to endure had caused his entire body to almost collapse. Cold sweat had soaked his underclothes and his breathing became increasingly ragged.

The lower down they descended, the more violent the incoming wind. The lower cliffs also brought with it the humming sounds of the wind as the knife like cold wind blew upon their faces.

"Why is this place so cold? My skin has almost been blown dry."

Sara muttered in discontent.

"Enough nonsense, be on high alert," Newton shouted back. "Do not put all your faith on the radar. Since there was a Stealth Hound Demon, it is likely that we will end up bumping into other stealth type monsters. Sara! Keep your eyes open and be vigilant!"

Sara gave a "heng". She could not help herself as she complained once more. "This instance dungeon is really getting on my nerves."

Although she complained about it, she still opened her eyes wide and

monitored the surrounding area – as an archer, her vision is the best amongst them all.

After a while, Damon abruptly shouted out from the front. “Halt! There is something!”

Before the stone stairs, something black was lying to the side of the stairs. Damon and Newton moved forward. Using the faint fluorescence from their body, they were able to view the outline of this thing. After which, their faces turned ugly.

It was a... giant spider!

Or more accurately, it was the body of a dead spider.

It was shaped like a small dog, with claws as sharp as a sickle. Although it could no longer move, anyone who saw it would feel their mind turning numb. Its head however, appeared to have been partially bitten off by something.

Newton inspected the spider for a bit; and then, his face suddenly changed!

Beside the spider’s corpse was a pool of viscous liquid, clearly having flowed out after its head was bitten off. The viscous liquid had yet to dry up, meaning that the time it was killed was not too long ago!

The Wind Slasher Guild members raised up their weapons as they carefully inspected their surroundings, their forward speed reduced.

After roughly a quarter of an hour, they finally reached the end of the stone staircase.

They were currently within a dark cove. However, the air here was not only cold, it also carried with it the traces of something strange, a slightly sweet scent – this scent was not pleasant to the nose, rather it caused those who smelled it to feel nauseated to the point of wanting to puke.

Damon was walking in the lead. Suddenly, his foot felt something soft. “Puchi”, it was as though he had stepped on something.

He quickly lifted his leg and looked down. “What the Hell is this?”

Upon the ground, the one thing that he had stepped on... it has an oval shape... with the appearance of an egg.

“This is...”

“There are a lot of them here!”

“Quick, look at the corner! There are more hanging on the side of the walls!”

Du Ya and Sara shouted out simultaneously.

It was at this point that the faint radiance allowed everyone to clearly see... within this cove that was not too big in size, its walls, corners, were all filled with piles upon piles of... eggs!

Pale white translucent eggs, covered by a creamy white viscous liquid, each of them the size of a coconut. They were all densely piled up together, who knows just how many there were!

Chapter 22: Black Widow

“Move quickly!”

Newton’s face rapidly changed. “We may have entered some monster’s nest! Quickly charge out of this cove!”

The image of those eggs were terrifying, causing a chill to spread through one’s heart. Everyone immediately rushed madly towards the front.

However, it was at this moment that a burst of “hua hua hua hua” sounds were emitted from the two sides of the cove right above their heads... it was followed by the descent of stones of various sizes...

“Newton! There is something on top! A lot of them!”

“Bloody Hell! Its spiders! There are so many of them! And so big!”

“They are coming down!”

Upon the walls were countless holes, resembling those of a bee’s nest. As they glanced around, they were unable to identify just how many of those spiders of various sizes were crawling out from within the holes! They then crawled along the walls towards the cove in their direction! The same was happening in every direction!

The movement speed of these spiders was extremely fast. In addition, their shapes were not small at all, being that of a small ordinary dog! Those who were faster had already jumped down the walls, blocking the road ahead.

“Damon, clear the way!”

Newton shouted. Without any hesitation, Damon waved his gigantic sword towards the incoming spiders!

Damon’s gigantic sword hacked open a spider’s head in one stroke! As a white coloured viscous liquid sprayed out towards his body, Damon brandished his great sword. A brilliant light burst out from the sword’s edge, causing a series of dazzling radiance to flash in the middle of the

air!

The spiders who were blocking the way gave out intermittent screams of misery. A portion of the spiders were dismembered and cleaved apart as Damon singlehandedly paved a way through the group of spiders with utter brutality!

“Quickly keep up! I will open the way, charge!” Damon turned around and waved to his team members. “The outer shell of these things are very hard!”

The gigantic sword within his hand whirled about, flying up and down! The fighting prowess shown by this guy was truly astonishing! He is comparable to a humanoid tank!

The spiders that were blocking their way forward were swept aside by him alone. As for the rest, they sped up their running speed – they have to take advantage of what little time they have! On both sides of the wall, even more spiders were rushing down. It was obvious that they were intending to surround them...

“Toss those NPCs!” Du Ya grunted. “That will give us some time.”

This time, Newton did not say anything. Du Ya and Sara looked at one another and proceeded to throw Soo Soo and the Japanese flight attendant on the ground.

Du Ya was more ruthless as he pulled out a dagger and pricked the Japanese flight attendant on her thigh. Blood flowed out freely and a nose piercing scent of blood drifted outwards.

“Haha! Du Ya, I like that freaky nature of yours!” Sara actually threw a wink at him.

“Throw that wastrel kid down. Han Bi, let’s go!”

Hearing Du Ya’s orders, Han Bi’s face turned into a struggle.

At this moment, he felt Chen Xiaolian squeezing his hand.

He raised his head to see Chen Xiaolian calmly shaking his head before using his mouth to form words in silence: “You need to go!”

Han Bi's struggled to breath, he looked at Chen Xiaolian with a complicated expression. Finally... gritting his teeth, he put Chen Xiaolian down.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly saw a system prompt:

"Someone sent you Light Sabre x1, someone sent you Beginner Class Healing Type Beast Blood x1."

Chen Xiaolian raised his head in surprise, looking up to Han Bi. Han Bi glanced at him, his mouth silently forming the words: Sorry, take care.

He watched as Han Bi ran forward with large strides and joined up with the Wind Slasher Guild members. Damon was creating a path with his savage sword skills, scattering anything that tried to block his way. Du Ya had also taken out his guns, shooting continuously. Newton and Pattern Man were responsible for covering the gaps. Their group rapidly moved towards the other opening within the cove, moving farther and farther...

Legions of spiders crawled down from the mountain walls; however, they did not continue chasing. Instead, they seemed to have suddenly realized something and began moving towards Chen Xiaolian...

To be precise, they were aiming at Takashimoto Shizuka.

Clearly, the scent of blood in the air had attracted these things.

Du Ya's baiting strategy was a success!

Surrounded by the massive number of spiders, the Japanese flight attendant let out a miserable scream. Her figure crawled rapidly towards Chen Xiaolian as she tried to seek some form of protection.

Soo Soo had already been petrified by fear and could only sit on her spot while sobbing.

Grinding his teeth, Chen Xiaolian sat up and hugged Soo Soo. He then sighed.

"Xiaolian oppa..." Soo Soo cried to the point of losing her breath. As for Takashimoto Shizuka, she had already reached Chen Xiaolian's side. However, she could only tremble, not a single coherent word could be

uttered, only a miserable scream.

At this moment, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt his heart washed by an odd sense of serenity. There was no fear and madness in the face of imminent death, only an indescribable sense of loss...

"I am sorry... I promised to take you home alive," Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile.

He observed the legions of spiders charging before him, their sharp-sickle like claws inching closer and closer... Chen Xiaolian simply hugged Soo Soo and closed his eyes...

...

The anticipated feeling of pain did not arrive. The sharp sickle-like claws had yet to land upon him.

After a while, Chen Xiaolian slowly opened his eyes and looked around in confusion.

He discovered that all three of them were surrounded by a dense ocean of spiders. However, for some unknown reason, these monsters did not rush forward to tear them apart. Instead... they appear to be waiting for something?

Suddenly, a commotion broke out among the swarm of spiders. The spiders of various sizes all showed a sense of unease... soon, the spider swarm separated themselves to two sides, creating a large open path before Chen Xiaolian and the two females.

Under Chen Xiaolian's wide-opened vigilant eyes... a monster appeared.

It was also a spider... the size however... was simply staggering!

The size of this spider was comparable to that of a calf! The black outer shell on its body appeared similar to steel in appearance and those sharp claws are even bigger than Damon's gigantic sword.

The giant spider slowly crawled out and the spiders on both sides all seemed to be turning fearful. All of them retreated to the two sides, as though not daring to get too close to it.

Even so, the giant spider seemed to have an irritable temper. As it slowly made its way towards the three of them, a spider accidentally got too close due to the lack of space among its brethren. This huge monster abruptly appeared to have been provoked.

It waved its humongous sickle claw. Kacha! The unlucky little spider was directly cut in half! However, the giant spider was not satisfied. It moved forward and clipped the corpse towards it, then it opened its enormous mouth...

Kacha! The spider's head was bitten off!

A viscous liquid sprayed all over the area, but the giant spider seemed to have only become even more irritable. Its gigantic body tilted about without moving as it turned around a few times. It then waved its claws, seemingly trying to capture its own brethren whose distance was too close to it...

When that happened, all the spiders became horrified and all of them fell back. The legion of spiders crawled up the mountain walls of their respective sides. Some directly fled into the hole amongst the walls...

In one breath, the giant spider killed around six of its own brethren. Some were dismembered and some were bitten to death by that enormous mouth...

Chen Xiaolian could clearly hear the swarm of spiders issuing cries of misery... the sound was clearly carrying a sense of dread.

Chen Xiaolian watched as the spider swarm within the cove dispersed in retreat, leaving behind the giant monster.

His mouth became parched and he swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

Suddenly, as though purely subconscious in nature, he used the 'interface vision' of the system to face the giant spider's outline, trying to check it...

[Prompt: Black Widow, Melee Type, A Class War Beast].

A Class? Isn't that one class higher than my own Owner Entrapping

Cat?

He could not even duke it out with a B Class Four-Eyed War Cat under perfect conditions. Now that he is seriously injured and partially crippled, he has to face an A Class?

Subsequently though, another line of prompt below caused Chen Xiaolian's heart to pound!

[Prompt: Target Black Widow is in the weakened phase of spawning, all attributes cut in half].

Weakened phase?

All attributes cut in half?

Chen Xiaolian who had already mentally embraced death suddenly found a ray of hope!

Chapter 23: Undress

Without showing any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. “I choose you, Pikachu! Argh, wrong, Garfield!”

The owner-entrapping cat transformed into a beam of light, appearing before Chen Xiaolian. Seemingly having sensed the dangerous atmosphere, it quickly shed off its adorable state, transforming into the Four-Eyed War Cat!

Garfield let out a roar and charged towards the Black Widow!

In terms of size, Garfield’s size was one grade lower than the Black Widow. Judging by the momentum behind him, the charge should have been enough... but...

The Black Widow suddenly raised its sickle like claws...

With a roar, Garfield fell to one side, a long bloody wound was added to its tiger stripes. The Black Widow raised its claws again. This time, Garfield used its forelimbs to stop the Black Widow’s sickle claws. Although the claw wound on its body was dripping blood, Garfield bit down savagely.

Kacha!

This bite landed on one of the Black Widow’s sickle claw – For the first time, Chen Xiaolian bore hatred towards spiders! Why do spiders have eight claws?!

In addition, the Black Widow is clearly an A Class War Beast of the system! Its strength is obviously more astounding when compared to the Four-Eyed War Cat... the claw that was bitten down by Garfield was waved, abruptly throwing Garfield off!

Garfield had its head slammed onto the ground with a “peng”! As it forced itself up, the Black Widow had already pounced before it!

Fast!

Its sickle was raised, and then it slashed down!

Garfield quickly dodged... with a “chi”, a rock next to him was cut by the Black Widow’s sickle claw as easily as cutting soft cheese!

This shocking cutting force caused the observing Chen Xiaolian’s heart to break out in cold sweat!

Garfield rapidly retreated while the Black Widow went after it. Under its gigantic sickle claws, eight rocks were easily cut apart in succession.

The Black Widow appeared berserk, everywhere it could reach, everywhere it went, a wild storm followed. Any rock that fell under its field of reach would end up being split apart.

Garfield jumped far away and began panting for air...

After having slashed apart numerable amount of stones, the Black Widow seemed to have calmed down. It stood far away and began to tinker with its claws.

Garfield then began behaving like a cat, and started moving about cautiously.

It bounced to the left and right, attempting to find an opportunity to attack...

It was at this moment that Chen Xiaolian discovered something critical!

To his surprise, every one of the Black Widow’s reaction was slower by... half a beat!

Indeed, it was a very minute half beat!

After Garfield had completed its jump to the left, it would turn to the left. After Garfield had turned to the right, it would then turn to the right...

In every instance, it was only after Garfield had finished its jump and landed upon the ground, issuing a sound that the Black Widow would turn around!

Chen Xiaolian’s heart suddenly pounded violently!

It... cannot see?

A thought suddenly flashed through his mind, followed by the rotating gears within his mind. A series of speculations was formed!

They are currently far underground! A place where there is no light!

To what extent is the darkness in this place? The Wind Slasher Guild members needed to use the Firefly Frog secretions to illuminate this area when they came in!

From a biological studies point of view: All life forms will evolve according to its environment!

Life forms that could survive and evolve within absolutely darkness... will usually have a weak vision!

The reason being, from an evolutionary perspective, these life forms do not need vision in a place of absolute darkness.

After having thought about this, Chen Xiaolian made a risky move!

He quickly summoned Garfield into the system!

Black Widow was suddenly unable to locate Garfield, and became seemingly stunned for a moment. It then turned around twice while maintaining its position – this awkward movement made Chen Xiaolian certain!

He made his next move!

Undress!

Do not forget, back when Chen Xiaolian was applying the Firefly Frog secretions, he had prepared a trick up his sleeve.

He had only smeared the secretions onto the protective suit!

After taking off the protective suit, Chen Xiaolian shouted out loudly, attracting the attention of the Black Widow. He then threw the protective suit that was glowing with the light from the Firefly Frog secretions towards the left of the Black Widow!

Shua!

The Black Widow was indeed lured by it. Its figure pounced forward, its

sickle claws slashing down! The protective suit was instantly cut into two!

The extent of its sharpness thoroughly shocked Chen Xiaolian's heart!

Even though this protective suit is clearly not high-levelled goods, it could at least provide some defence – during the time when they were dealing with the Demon Soldiers, it had blocked off several attacks for him!

After the Black Widow failed to hit him, it scraped its claws for a while. Then it suddenly turned towards Chen Xiaolian!

Chen Xiaolian looked at the two females beside him.

Soo Soo's body was not smeared with Firefly Frog secretions. Perhaps it was due to her age, they had thus decided not to smear it on her.

The only source of light...

Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation... he extended his hands towards Takashimoto Shizuka!

Takashimoto Shizuka had originally been scared senseless. It was at this moment, however, that she suddenly felt Chen Xiaolian's hands reaching towards her chest.

The Japanese flight attendant's body trembled. Her first thought was: At a time like this! He actually wanted to do this kind of thing?

There was no time for Chen Xiaolian to unbutton it one by one. With a "shua", he tore off the Japanese flight attendant's uniform! The buttons popped out, and tears fell out of Takashimoto Shizuka as she cried sharply: "No!"

"Don't make any noise!" Chen Xiaolian urgently shouted out. After that, he proceeded neatly and quickly to render the Japanese flight attendant half-naked...

There was no way around it. The Firefly Frog secretion on her body was applied by Sara. That woman had evilly applied it all over the place.

Despite seeing her underwear being torn off, Takashimoto Shizuka did not have the strength to even cry. She tried to push Chen Xiaolian's

hands away. However, how could she resist Chen Xiaolian's strength?

When Chen Xiaolian's hands were seemingly stretched towards her bra, the Japanese flight attendant finally cried out. "No! I beg you please don't!"

Chen Xiaolian stared blankly before quickly replying, "Do not misunderstand, I am just..."

As his mouth was talking, his hand continued moving.

Shua!

It was torn off!

He then crumpled it and violently threw it away!

The Japanese flight attendant quickly put both hands up to cover her chest... that blossom white part. Chen Xiaolian did not look at it in detail and only had a glimpse...

En, it turns out she is flat...

A trace of regret appeared within Chen Xiaolian's heart.

After the clothes were thrown out, the light emitted from it attracted the Black Widow's attack. The giant spider charged towards the clothes, its gigantic sickle claws slashing down madly, tearing apart the flight attendant's uniform... as for the piece that was probably Victoria's Secret's latest series of underwear, that too was brutally ripped apart...

The Japanese flight attendant felt Chen Xiaolian's hand moving towards her. She was about to scream out when Chen Xiaolian's hand suddenly covered her mouth!

"Do not make any noise! It is blind!"

Chen Xiaolian whispered, his mouth was right beside Takashimoto Shizuka's ears. Wet and hot...

Takashimoto Shizuka's body trembled... at the same time, some place within her also seemed to tremble once.

Chen Xiaolian did not have the spare energy to care about all these. He

nervously observed the Black Widow. After the Black Widow vented its fury upon Takashimoto Shizuka's clothes, it begun to quiet down... it was as though it was trying to carefully detect a signal... it stood above the flight attendant uniform. Thanks to the faint illumination from the uniform, Chen Xiaolian was able to clearly see what it looks like...

Chen Xiaolian's heart froze!

He quickly grabbed a stone and threw it far away with all his strength. The stone dropped behind the Black Widow!

The stone hit the mountain walls, and the Black Widow immediately picked up the sound caused by it. Its huge sickle claws flashed and promptly slashed down upon the mountain walls!

As he watched the Black Widow slicing down on the door sized rocks as easily as one would cut butter...

Chen Xiaolian's scalp turned numb and he cursed inwardly: You bitch sure are an expert in excavation! Are you from Lanxiang?

The Black Widow was lured farther and farther away until Chen Xiaolian could no longer see its outline clearly.

At that moment, there were only two faint source of firefly light within the cove. They were Chen Xiaolian's protective suit and Takashimoto Shizuka's clothes.

With the exception of those two, the cove remained shrouded in darkness.

Chen Xiaolian held several stones within his palm. From time to time, he would throw a stone far away. The sound of the stone would attract the Black Widow's attention – at the current, neither side could see each other.

Chen Xiaolian had already loosened his grip on Takashimoto Shizuka's mouth. He quickly produced the final Beginner Class Healing Type Beast Blood that Han Bi had given him and swallowed it.

He placed one hand around Soo Soo and the other around the Japanese

flight attendant. He then whispered into their ears. “Get up and follow me. Do not make any noise.”

Chen Xiaolian could feel his body strength returning and he could begin to feel his injured ankle. However, due to the injury of the broken shoulder being far beyond the healing capacity of the ‘Beginner Class Beast Blood’, it could not be healed. It only reduced the pain significantly.

However, this was quite good. At least now that his ankle had recovered, he would have the ability to move.

Although his strength was still weak...

“A clear-sighted person versus the blind! Watch me beat you to death!”

Chen Xiaolian pulled the two females up.

1 Lanxiang School in Shandong, China specializes in excavation courses.

Chapter 24: You Can Kiss Me Back

Chen Xiaolian cautiously threw out several stones. By listening to the sound made by the Black Widow's reaction, he estimated the distance between it and himself. With his hands around both females, he moved with an extremely slow rate as he tried his best to not make any sound.

Chen Xiaolian steered the two females to where he recalled was the corner of the cove. He had them hide themselves in the corner beside a rocky cliff. As for the Black Widow, it had been lured to another side by the stones he threw out.

Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief.

"Wait here. Do not make any noise and do not move."

He loosened his arms around the two females. Due to the darkness of their surroundings at the present, he was unable to see that Takashimoto Shizuka's face had turned red to the point of oozing blood.

Takashimoto Shizuka's skin is very smooth and creamy. In addition, when he was hugging her earlier, he could feel the softness of her body. Even though they were in a time of crisis, Chen Xiaolian who is a virgin was naturally unable to control his pounding heart.

At any rate, I am going to be fighting to the death... I might end up dying here, right?

Chen Xiaolian himself could not discern if his brains had shorted out or if it was due to other factors, but at this moment his heart suddenly burst forth with an inexplicable courage.

Within the darkness, both his hands clasped onto Takashimoto Shizuka's face before firmly kissing her!

Takashimoto Shizuka only had enough time to let out a "wu" before feeling her mouth being blocked off.

This person's kiss is extremely awkward and is even somewhat rough.

After he moved away his head, Takashimoto Shizuka heard him

whispering into her ear.

“I am sorry, I just want to savour the taste of a kiss before I die... consider this as me owing you.”

“If I make it, you can kiss me back.”

Kiss, kiss back?

What was that supposed to mean?

Takashimoto Shizuka's heart became a mess. However, Chen Xiaolian did not say or do anything else. He quickly turned around and left! He ran out towards the centre of the cove!

His running sound immediately alerted the Black Widow. Chen Xiaolian was able to hear the other party crawling over with considerable speed, the claws emitting “hualala” sounds as it scraped the ground.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly stopped moving. Sneering, he retrieved something from his pocket.

It was a very small bottle!

This was... the bottle with the leftover Firefly Frog secretions!

The transparent glass emitted a faint radiance, seemingly indicating to the Black Widow where it should attack! He watched as the Black Widow rushed towards him. As the distance between them lessened, Chen Xiaolian suddenly bent his body as he performed a standard baseball throwing action!

Xiu!

The bottle emanating a faint light flew out! It appeared to resemble a beacon...

At the same time, Chen Xiaolian quickly fell to the ground. Exerting all his strength, he quickly made his way to one side!

The charging speed of the Black Widow was extremely fast. In addition, there was also the factor of inertia. Even though it tried to stop itself, it still found itself being forced towards the spot where Chen Xiaolian was

originally standing! Chen Xiaolian could practically feel the Black Widow's sickle claws sweeping past his face!

Pa!

The glass bottle struck the Black Widow squarely on its back before breaking, causing the Firefly Frog secretions to spill out and spread across the outer shell of the Black Widow. In this wide-open area, the Black Widow had turned into a conspicuously moving light source.

Chen Xiaolian had rolled all the way to the side. He got up and saw that the distance between the Black Widow and himself was only tens of metres. The Black Widow was furiously turning around.

“Come on out, Garfield!”

The Four-Eyed War Cat was summoned out again! It roared before charging it from the side, causing the Black Widow to stagger. Garfield's sharp claws left deep claw marks upon the Black Widow's sickle claws and limbs.

This owner-entrapping cat seemed to have understood that its strength was weaker than its opponent. After attacking, it retreated, moving quickly to a side.

At this moment, the enemy was exposed while he hid in the darkness. Garfield paced about in the surroundings. The Black Widow charged at him several times, but the sharp sickle claws only managed to fleece a few of the surrounding rocks and was unable to bring any harm to the Four-Eyed War Cat.

Chen Xiaolian was waiting!

He was waiting for an opportunity!

At long last, Garfield did not let Chen Xiaolian down and unleashed a 'Cat's Roar' against the Black Widow!

Against the Black Widow, an A Class War Beast, the damage of Cat's Roar was too small, however... the additional 'stun' effect was what Chen Xiaolian was aiming for!

He was gambling!

After being struck by the translucent mass of qi, the Cat's Roar, it only retreated two steps backwards. It then sharpened its sickle claws and rush forward madly... Garfield retreated again.

Stun effect did not trigger!

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and remained immobile. He continued waiting.

Garfield dodged and scurried about in all directions, a cat that was being chased by a Black Widow throughout the entire cove area. In some instances, Garfield ended up stamping down onto the spider eggs lying on the ground, breaking them in the process. This caused the Black Widow to emit a shrill cry of anger.

Soon, Garfield utilized the 'Cat's Roar' again. This time too, the stun effect did not trigger.

Chen Xiaolian became concerned.

He could sense that Garfield's momentum was quickly declining. It was clear that even though its damage was low, the 'Cat's Roar', Garfield's only long-range attack skill consumed a lot of Endurance.

Again! Again ah!

It seemed as though the Heavens had finally heard Chen Xiaolian's prayer...

Garfield let out a furious roar!

The mass of qi discharged this time was obviously much smaller in size, however, as it hit the Black Widow's body...

[Prompt: War Pet Four-Eyed War Cat launched the 'Cat's Roar' skill. Small probability of causing stun triggered. Due to the target being of a higher level compared to your War Pet, stun duration halved. Effect will last three seconds... three...]

Chen Xiaolian's heart was overjoyed!

He did not even bother about the 'stun duration halved' matter. Wielding the light sabre, he charged forward!

This charge contained all his might!

The Black Widow remained at its original spot, its eight limbs appeared to be moving drunkenly, swinging back and forth. Chen Xiaolian vigorously charged at it, bending his knees to the ground and letting his body sweep pass the ground!

His knees scraped the ground, causing skin and flesh to be torn off but Chen Xiaolian did not pay any heed to those matters!

Chen Xiaolian used both hands to raise up the light sabre and activated the beam of light. His body remained close to the ground as the momentum propelled him forward to slide across the bottom part of the Black Widow's belly!

Observing the belly of the Black Widow above his head, he noticed that there was a sheet of white...

Chen Xiaolian raised up both hands to viciously pierce upwards with the light sabre!

Zi zi zi zi...

A harsh sound! The light sabre's beam left a long wound upon the Black Widow's belly! A white viscous liquid spilled out!

The Black Widow let out a painful howl, its mouth opened wide. It then raised its sickle claws and stabbed down towards the ground. At this moment, however, Chen Xiaolian had already slipped out from another side!

Three seconds!

Stun effect ended!

Chen Xiaolian quickly deactivated the light sabre to remove its illumination!

The Black Widow screamed painfully. The injury on its belly had snapped it out of the effects of the stun. Yet, it was still unable to stand

properly. As it turned around, it was obvious that it was staggering.

My gamble was spot on! The belly is really its weak point!

Chen Xiaolian sighed a breath of relief.

He recalled having watched some science programs, which pointed out that the greatest vulnerability for most spiders is the belly. That is also where its spider web organ is positioned. It is also the softest area out of all the spiders' body parts!

Garfield who had unleashed three Cat's Roar was obviously exhausted in terms of Endurance. However, Chen Xiaolian dared not summon it back into the system.

The Four-Eyed War Cat continued attacking with all its might. Taking advantage of the Black Widow's unstable posture, it landed one claw strike after another upon the Black Widow's body.

Using its B Class power, which could break apart a tree with a paw strike, Garfield left several marks on the Black Widow's body before it finally exhausted all its Endurance.

Watching Garfield shrinking, Chen Xiaolian quickly summoned it back into the system.

After having done that, Chen Xiaolian carefully closed the distance between him and the Black Widow by circling around to its back! He then moved closer bit by bit!

This process took a very long time! As time ticked by, Chen Xiaolian seemed to have transformed into a hunter with a great deal of patience!

He did not act in haste and only approached cautiously. Two steps to the front, then stop for a moment; he then made a careful observation of the Black Widow's reaction. If the Black Widow turned around, he would instantly move in a circle!

According to his mental calculations, he had spent nearly a quarter of an hour to close the distance between the Black Widow and himself from a 50 metres gap to less than 20 metres!

The current distance was quite dangerous. Due to the illumination source being spilled onto the Black Widow's body, if it were to turn around and face Chen Xiaolian, then... that faint illumination would very likely cause Chen Xiaolian to become exposed.

Chen Xiaolian gripped the light sabre handle in the palm of his hand, his palm was filled with sweat and his teeth were gritted!

At this moment, the Black Widow suddenly made a move that Chen Xiaolian did not expect.

It suddenly swayed its head about, then...

It crawled slowly towards the left corner of the cove

Chen Xiaolian's heart sank!

The left corner... there... was where Takashimoto Shizuka and Soo Soo were hiding!

Chen Xiaolian stared at the Black Widow's head and immediately recognized the problem!

Scent!

The Japanese flight attendant's thigh was pricked with a knife before, causing a no small amount of blood to flow out. The scent of blood had been scattered to the air! Even though the Black Widow was blind... its sense of smell was not completely lost.

The Black Widow began to move towards the scent of blood as it crawled towards the corner.

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment. Then... he made his mind to take the risk!

No longer being able to aim for the best positioning, Chen Xiaolian rushed up madly. His objective was clear, it was the Black Widow's... rear abdomen! More accurately, he was aiming for the rear tip!

The system prompt had explained that the Black Widow was in its weakened phase, all attributes halved...

Then, why would it be in a weakened phase?

Chen Xiaolian made a speculation – this cove filled with spider eggs was the answer!

Black Widow, this name could be associated with many things: A mother spider, spawning eggs... and it will eat male spiders!

The Black Widow eating up other spiders was something that Chen Xiaolian had already witnessed the moment it appeared.

Now add in the fact that there were so many eggs in the cove and the name 'Black Widow'! If he still could not figure out why it was weakened – those National Geographic magazines that he read would have been for naught!

The almighty senior Bear Grylls will also not forgive me!

Chen Xiaolian rushed out. His speed at this moment was astonishing!

For Chen Xiaolian whose body had been strengthened, the distance of only tens of metres could be covered in less than 2 seconds. The light sabre's beam lit up!

Then...

He exerted all his strength, all his might, exhausted... everything!

All of it was thrown behind the light sabre as it was fiercely stabbed forward!

Puchi!

All the way until the handle itself was pierced in!

The Black Widow's body violently trembled. It abruptly raised its head and roared out in pain, its sharp cry nearly piercing through Chen Xiaolian's ears!

Chen Xiaolian's one strike had succeeded and he wanted to retreat as soon as possible. Unfortunately, he was too late. The Black Widow's hind limbs fiercely bounced up. Chen Xiaolian felt a tremor running through his body, as though a heavy hammer had struck him. His body sailed up

into the air to fall down in an area around eight metres away. After he fell to the ground, his mouth spat out blood continuously.

Upon his chest, a sickle-like gash had formed and his clothes and skin had been cut! His flesh was cut open, exposing the white bones within!

The Black Widow turned around; it had already locked on to Chen Xiaolian's direction. It struggled to move forward, but its 'rear tip' was greatly wounded. A light sabre remained stuck, piercing from its rear into its abdomen, causing the Black Widow to helplessly shake about for a moment. In the end, it fell to the back as its hind limbs were no longer able to support its weight. As for its fore limbs, they flailed about but were unable to bring it even a step forward!

Chen Xiaolian could feel his blood flowing out freely, the severe pain seemingly pushing him to the point of unconsciousness.

At long last, the Black Widow issued a sound that resembled a helpless sigh. Then, its body turned crooked as it lay upon the ground...

[Prompt, you have successfully killed an A Class War Beast, Black Widow. Loot obtained: Mid Class Healing Type Beast Blood x2, Black Widow's Soul x1. Do you want to pick it up?]

Chen Xiaolian could feel his eyelids getting increasingly heavier and more blurry... he forcibly gritted his teeth and confirmed the pickup...

He then quickly retrieved one of the Mid Class Healing Type Beast Blood from the system... swallow...

He was finally unable to hold on to his consciousness anymore and closed his eyes.

[Prompt, you have successfully killed an A Class War Beast, Black Widow x1. Obtained system reward for newbie's first kill of an A Class War Beast. Please confirm].

En?

That was Chen Xiaolian's last trace of consciousness as he finally fainted for real.

1 Garfield shrinks back into Adorable Form after its Endurance runs out.

Chapter 25: Humane Brother Xiaolian

When Chen Xiaolian woke up, he felt his body leaning against a soft place.

He opened his eyes and heard Takashimoto Shizuka's exclamations of joy.

Only after blinking a few times did Chen Xiaolian confirm that he was being embraced by the Japanese flight attendant. His head was resting on her pair of slender legs.

Turning around, he saw Soo Soo with tears flowing down her face. She moved to his side and tightly gripped onto his clothes with her small hands.

"I did not die... haha, that is good!"

Chen Xiaolian exhaled.

Takashimoto Shizuka's face was somewhat flushed. She pulled back her legs and carefully helped Chen Xiaolian into a sitting position.

"Are you all right?"

Listening to the Japanese flight attendant's gentle voice, Chen Xiaolian looked at her... en, she had already put on a layer of clothes... it was obviously Soo Soo's jacket. However, the little loli's size was clearly too small. The little jacket was stretched tight and taut to fit her body. Additionally, some areas were left exposed.

There was a very weak light source due to a pile of tattered and torn uniform belonging to the Japanese flight attendant. The uniform still had the Firefly Frog secretions upon it – they must have retrieved it.

After glancing at Takashimoto Shizuka just once, he quickly averted his gaze to look around.

He then frowned: The three of them were still in the cove!

This is not a safe place...

The multitudinous holes upon the walls were keeping a great number of

spider monsters! Even though they had been scared off by the Black Widow, if some of them crawled out again, then the three of them would have to be buried here.

Standing up, Chen Xiaolian examined his own chest... the deep bone-revealing wound had already been closed up. Even his previously injured left shoulder was no longer causing him any pain.

En, Mid Class Healing Beast Blood has a much better healing potency compared to Beginner Class.

“How long was I asleep?” Chen Xiaolian turned around to look at the two females.

“I do not know, there is no way to calculate the time here,” Takashimoto Shizuka carefully replied. “Maybe... about half an hour.”

Half an hour? That is not bad...

Chen Xiaolian instantly summoned out Garfield. Seeing it turn into the Adorable Form of a fat cat, he fed it a cat biscuit. After eating, Garfield's withering spirit was lifted.

Suddenly, Chen Xiaolian felt his clothes being tugged. He lowered his head to see Soo Soo looking at him with wide-open eyes. “Oppa... the monster. You killed it?”

“En... I have killed it.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled gently and rubbed her hair. He turned around to look at the area in the cove where the Black Widow died...

He walked over to check it out. The corpse had disappeared but there was something on the ground.

Eh... my own light sabre?

Better retrieve it.

He then recalled the system prompt that he had seen just before losing consciousness...

Chen Xiaolian quickly checked the system. When he saw the ‘system

reward for newbie's first kill of an A Class War Beast', his heart secretly pulsated several times. He then confirmed it.

[Prompt, following the rules for newbies, whenever a newbie kills an A Class or higher class of War Beast, they will receive this reward. This reward can be received at any time. This reward can only be obtained once for each player. Do you want to check the details?]

What nonsense, of course I want to check!

[Reward description: Because you have killed an A Class War Beast, you obtained this system reward. Select one of the personal attributes to have it enhanced, effect of enhancement for the selected attribute is an increase by one class].

Select one attribute, increase by one class?

This reward is very praiseworthy ah!

Chen Xiaolian quickly opened his personal attributes interface and viewed it.

Physique: C

Endurance: D

Agility: B

Energy Points: Zero

En... ignore Energy Points first. I do not have any ranged skills, there is no need for Energy Points at the moment.

Melee... strength should be primarily connected to Physique! My destructive strength is too weak, if I could enhance my destructive strength...

Agility is good as well. If it were to be enhanced by one class, then my running speed would be faster...

Forget it, with him bringing the two females along, running faster is useless... when the time comes for him to make a desperate escape, Chen Xiaolian knew that he did not have what it takes to leave the two females

aside – that is not how a male should act!

In the end, enhancing Physique is still the best. With an increased strength, my melee power would be increased as well.

But as Chen Xiaolian was preparing to enhance his 'Physique' by one class...

[Prompt, do you want to enhance Physique? Current attribute at C, after enhancement, attribute would be at C+].

Eh? Only from C to C+... I had assumed that it would directly become B Class...

However, now that this had happened, Chen Xiaolian became hesitant!

With the Class increment being so minute... it became evident that the difference in Class increments for this system is very big!

Moreover, according to Chen Xiaolian's previous experience of playing games for years... for any game, the early upgrades are much easier. However, the upgrades in the late game, for each level, there will be a great divide!

This reward that could directly give one upgrade at any given moment while disregarding any conditions... if he were to use it here, would it not be a waste?

Upgrading C to C+. It would be more cost-effective to do so using some other methods! Do not forget, Chen Xiaolian had previously strengthened himself using the points given by the Beginner Strengthening Kit. Using only 100 points, he was able to upgrade his Physique and Agility by one class! However... based on his experience of playing countless games, he made a speculation. In the later stages, in order to upgrade his attribute by one class from say, A+ to S Class... it may very well require several thousand or even tens of thousands of points!

Or perhaps it would be an insurmountable Heavenly divide!

This upgrade type of reward, it would be better to leave it for later...

As the saying goes, after a hundred feet worth of success, take yet

another step . That is the most difficult step – why don't I keep this unconditional upgrade reward until the time for the 'next step'?

Although... deep down a faint voice was scolding him: At a time like this, what future do you want to consider? Heaven knows what kind of difficulty we will encounter next! Isn't the biggest goal to leave here and head home? Who cares about in the future? Upgrade my strength and increase my chances of surviving is good enough!

However... after Chen Xiaolian continued hesitating for a while, on the [Do you want to initiate enhancement now], he selected [No].

He firmly shook his head to shut off the distracting thoughts inside his head.

En, there is another loot...

Black Widow's soul!

[Captured Black Widow's soul, do you want to adopt it as a War Pet?]

Chen Xiaolian laughed out!

Hahaha! Trading in a water gun for a cannon!

The Black Widow is a powerful one ah!

He lowered his head to see the fat cat that was using its fat head to rub his boots...

It is more powerful than you, you know?

Heng, after this you should change your profession to a full-time adorability flasher! Just leave the combat side of things to Black Widow!

“Confirm!”

Chen Xiaolian smiled from ear to ear.

The next moment however, he froze.

[Prompt: Due to Class restriction, you can only adopt one War Pet. Do you want to replace? If replacement is chosen, the original War Pet would be exterminated by the system].

... exterminated!

The bloody word had made its way into Chen Xiaolian's mind!

He lowered his head to again look at the fat cat that was rubbing against his boots while flashing its adorability...

Sighing... he selected [No].

I am not an ungrateful person.

Although this cat can be quite the shitty cat... if it had not fought to the death against the Black Widow, Chen Xiaolian would not have any chance to hold on until the end. Thinking back to how it had its body slashed by the Black Widow time and again...

If he has the Black Widow, then he would let it retire and turn to a full-time adorable flasher.

But, extermination?

Chen Xiaolian did not show any hesitation to say no to this thought!

He bent down and picked up Garfield into his arms, then rubbed its fat head.

"Hey, I have returned you the favour. Next time, you will need to work hard to fight, all right? Don't entrap your owner anymore."

"Meow~~~"

1 '百尺竿头, 更进一步'. It means to continue striving for greater progress even after having achieved a high level of success.

Chapter 26: Must Survive

We must not continue staying in this cove. This place is too dangerous!

Chen Xiaolian pulled the two females over and made the decision to leave this place.

“Let us continue moving forward.”

Chen Xiaolian had no choice but to make this decision.

Go back? That would mean going through the stone stairway on the cliff! In addition... they had seen a spider corpse upon the stairway before. This meant that there was a possibility of the spiders crawling up there. If they were to encounter those spiders while climbing the stairway, then they would have no place to escape to.

Go further back? The great hall with Demon Soldiers had been made to collapse and is now blocked off. There is no way to move back.

The only way out is... to move forward.

“We’ll go slower, maintain vigilance at all time... hopefully, we will not meet the Wind Slasher Guild members.”

...

He brought the two females together with him; the wound on the flight attendant’s thigh had already been tied up. Chen Xiaolian had hesitated and chosen not to give Takashimoto Shizuka the Healing Beast Blood – it was not because Chen Xiaolian was being stingy but because there was only one Mid Class Healing Beast Blood left!

There was no telling what they would end up encountering. In case a fight was to erupt, he might require it. Not to mention... only by having himself survive would the two females have any hope of staying alive.

Chen Xiaolian was not being selfish. At a time like this, he had to make this choice.

He had one of Takashimoto Shizuka’s hand draped over his shoulders as they moved. As for Soo Soo, he had Shizuka use her other hand to hold on

to her.

En, Garfield was up front scouting ahead.

Although their speed was slow, the three of them exited the cove rapidly. Before them...

...

Outside the cove was a cliff!

A bottomless chasm was laid out before them! Tens of metres away on the opposite area was another cliff.

The one thing connecting the two cliffs was a rickety iron chain bridge. Although there were some boards atop it, they were basically all rotten. In addition, there was also blowing winds here. Under the roaring winds, the iron chain bridge swayed unsteadily between the two cliffs, akin to a swing...

Heavily gritting his teeth, Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the pale faced Takashimoto Shizuka, then towards Soo Soo.

The Japanese flight attendant's thigh had suffered from an injury while Soo Soo was lacking in strength... it was unlikely that these two females would be able to cross this unsteady iron chain bridge with their own strength.

"I can bring you across... however..." Chen Xiaolian frowned. "I only have two hands. One will be holding onto the iron chain while the other hand holds on to one person. Thus... I will need to do it twice."

The two females understood.

"Oppa, bring unnie over first. I will wait for you here. I will be obedient and won't run around," Soo Soo blinked her big round eyes as she said.

Those dark round eyes, it was simply too adorable for Chen Xiaolian to resist.

"Take her over first..." Takashimoto Shizuka whispered. "She is a child, it is more important to protect her safety."

“That is enough, stop it,” Chen Xiaolian thought about it. “Truth is, there is not much of a difference... even though this place is not safe, the same could be said about the other side. It does not matter who I send over first, when I am coming back here for the other person, the one on the other side would be left alone... theoretically speaking, the risk is the same for both sides.”

Chen Xiaolian thought about how to proceed. He summoned Garfield back into the system before bringing Soo Soo over the bridge!

The process in itself was scary but actually of no real risk. The iron chain bridge swayed a lot and the little girl was scared to the point of closing off her eyes. So, Chen Xiaolian hugged her with one hand as she tightly held onto his neck...

With Chen Xiaolian’s current level of astonishing Physique, his strength was comparable to a low class War Beast. (Four-Eyed War Cat expressed its discontent: Who are you calling a low class War Beast?)

After crossing the bridge, Chen Xiaolian placed Soo Soo down on the ground before summoning out Garfield to keep her company. If any danger were to appear, this guy would be able to at least do something about it.

However, as Chen Xiaolian was moving back using the iron chain bridge...

Boom!!!

Both cliffs abruptly shook with severe intensity!

“Earthquake?!”

It was then followed by the sound of rumbling!

The ground kept shaking! Stones fell continuously from above the cliffs! Soo Soo who was on the other side began crying as she squatted down on the ground, covering her ears.

Takashimoto Shizuka was also scared, her ability to stand firmly lost as she fell onto a sitting position on the ground.

It was then that a loud bang erupted!

Somewhere on the other side, a place deeper into the instance dungeon... a seemingly vast amount of light flashed out!

It appeared to be due to something exploding!

The intensity of the quakes gradually increased!

The iron chains emitted groaning sounds! The degree of swaying was nearing 360 degrees! Chen Xiaolian who was on it was unable to move forward at all and could only hold on to the iron chains!

It was at this moment that an unpleasant sound of twisting metal could be heard!

The iron chain fixed upon Takashimoto Shizuka's cliff area suddenly issued out a cracking sound! An iron chain broke off. With a "xiu", it fell down the cliff!

"Son of a bitch!"

Chen Xiaolian cursed loudly.

"Mr Xiaolian!"

Takashimoto Shizuka suddenly stopped crying. She vigorously jumped up from the ground, throwing herself onto the side of the cliff.

Chen Xiaolian shouted. "Don't go near the cliff! Stand properly and wait for me to pick you up!"

Takashimoto Shizuka bit down hard on her lips.

At present, blood had started flowing from her lips! The weak Japanese flight attendant's eyes flashed with absolute determination!

"Mr. Xiaolian! You must go back quickly! Do not come over!"

"Don't talk nonsense! Retreat from the cliff side! Wait for me!" Chen Xiaolian was furious. He gripped onto the iron chain and stepped several paces forward.

Kacha!

Another iron chain had broken!

This time around, the breaking sound came from Soo Soo's area.

"Mr. Xiaolian! Quickly go back!" Takashimoto Shizuka's face was filled with tears. "Enough! It is enough! You have done more than enough for us! The iron chain is about to break! Quickly go back!"

Plop.

Takashimoto Shizuka knelt down on the ground, clenched her fists tightly and exerted all her strength to shout. "Enough! It is really enough! Don't risk yourself for us anymore! You have done enough! The chain is going to break! Quickly go back!"

"I can still try!" Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and moved yet another two paces forward. This time though, a "kacha" sound rang out... another heart shaking sound came from the connection point for the iron chains!

"Go back!"

Takashimoto Shizuka suddenly jumped up. "Quickly go back! Even if you come over, the iron chain is going to break and you won't be able to reach the other side! Soo Soo is still over there!"

"I..." Chen Xiaolian's heart was filled with regret.

"Go back! I will be waiting over here. When you are safe, you can think of a way to save me... do not worry about me, I will be waiting here."

Chen Xiaolian was thinking of saying something. However, the weak Japanese flight attendant, Takashimoto Shizuka suddenly seemed to be bursting with courage.

"If you still won't go back! I will immediately jump down the cliff!"

Boom!

Another loud sound rang out! In the connection area for the iron chains, a small chunk of stone broke off directly and fell into the deep abyss...

Seeing the iron chain bridge teetering on the brink of collapse, in just another moment...

“I will really jump!”

Seeing how Chen Xiaolian was still hesitating, Takashimoto Shizuka suddenly took a step towards the side of the cliff...

Chen Xiaolian could see that this Japanese woman was serious!

“Don’t! I will go back! I will go back!”

Chen Xiaolian understands as well that the matter was no longer possible.

Three iron chain had broken off in succession. The bridge could collapse at any given moment!

He quickly retreated until he reached the side of the cliff...

Just as his feet came in contact with the ground...

With a bang, the connection point for the iron chain bridge at Takashimoto Shizuka’s side completely broke! The entire iron chain bridge fell down into the abyss...

Holding on to Soo Soo, Chen Xiaolian quickly retreated...

The rumbling sounds continued non-stop as the number of broken rocks increased. Both sides of the cliff had an entire piece directly chipped off!

Chen Xiaolian brought Soo Soo over to a safe area before looking back to the other side. He then breathed a sigh of relief.

Takashimoto Shizuka was still there. She had safely retreated several metres away from the cliff side.

Countless rocks had fallen down, transforming into an obstruction blocking the path that they had used to exit the spider cove!

This meant that Takashimoto Shizuka was now eternally trapped on the other side, a place upon the cliff with a surface area of less than tens of metres.

Taking a deep breath, Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. “Wait for me! I will definitely think of a way to save you!”

Takashimoto Shizuka stood there, her face filled with tears. She forced

herself to put on a smile; she then waved with all her might and shouted in a loud voice. “You must survive, Mr Xiaolian!”

She gently rubbed away her tears and murmured. “You must live on... you must.”

Chapter 27: Wind Slasher Guild's Crisis

Chen Xiaolian held on to Soo Soo and continued venturing forth.

After the cliff area was a passage. While moving across this passage, Chen Xiaolian unexpectedly saw bloodstains upon the ground!

The crimson red blood exuded a nose piercing scent.

Moreover... back then, the sounds of explosions and flashes of fire had appeared from some distance...

Perhaps it was from the members of the Wind Slasher Guild?

To survive... Without any path of retreat, how would I escape from here?

There is also the need to save Takashimoto Shizuka... in that case... the one method available would likely be...

Complete this instance dungeon?

Perhaps, only by completing this instance dungeon would the way out of this underground labyrinth reveal itself?

...

The blood on the ground meant that the Wind Slasher Guild had encountered an intense battle here. In addition, it seems someone had been injured?

Hopefully, the one injured is not Han Bi.

Chen Xiaolian carefully led Soo Soo through the passage. There, he observed the remnant marks left on the wall... there were also several arrows. Those obviously belonged to Sara.

When they reached a corner in the passage...

An item upon the ground caused Chen Xiaolian to become momentarily stunned!

That was... a scimitar!

Chen Xiaolian clearly recalled that this was one of the dual weapons

wielded by Pattern Man. Additionally, this scimitar must certainly be one of his high levelled equipment. For a Player to end up losing his own weapon, one could only imagine what kind of miserable circumstance they have found themselves in.

He picked up the scimitar, gently testing its weight and found that it was handy – this item was certainly of a higher level compared to his own light sabre.

Using the system to check:

[Snow Edge, B+ Class Melee Equipment, additional 'Armour Break' effect, increases probability of breaking through one's defences. When dual wielding, there is a chance to trigger 'Sword Break' during melee battle, giving a small probability to break the opponent's weapon. Note, additional effect is subject to restrictions due to Class difference].

Good stuff!

Chen Xiaolian let out a sigh.

At the end, it is stated that the additional effect is subject to restrictions due to Class difference. It meant that when facing weapons and equipment of a higher class, the additional effect would not trigger.

Even so, this is already good!

This scimitar is of the B+ Class. In other words, when using this weapon, there is the possibility of breaking armour that is of the B+ Class or below with one hit!

Because this is a dual wield weapon, if two of them are to be used at the same time, there will be a chance of directly breaking a weapon that is of the B+ Class or below during the course of a melee battle!

Although the matter of probability is dependent on the person... just imagine two person of the same level in the midst of PK, with their respective weapons seemingly to be of the same class . However, what if one side could suddenly break the opposing side's weapon or their defensive armour...

Such a good weapon ended up being lost by the Pattern Man... just what kind of disaster did the Wind Slasher Guild encounter?

With the Snow Edge in his hand, Chen Xiaolian took a few more steps forward with Soo Soo...

Then, he saw an even more amazing scene!

A door like sword was pierced into the ground!

This was... a half broken sword!

Chen Xiaolian was even more familiar towards this item! Its owner should be Damon!

This gigantic sword, in addition to Damon's robust bodybuilder physique would allow him to transform himself at any moment into the incarnation of a savage path-clearing tank!

But now...

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes as he looked at the broken sword.

Just what kind of calamity could it be that would lead to Damon's mighty weapon being broken here?

That explosion and flash earlier...

They continued taking several steps forward...

Chen Xiaolian suddenly stopped moving!

He saw a figure hanging upon the mountain walls. With a solemn face, he suddenly took a deep breath before squatting down. He lightly cupped Soo Soo's face and whispered. "Soo Soo, you need to stay here alone, do not go anywhere. Stay in this place and wait for me, all right?"

With an expression of fear, Soo Soo raised her head and looked up at the mountain walls...

A figure was swaying amidst the blowing winds.

It was a person!

Du Ya! That freak Du Ya!

This person's head was drooping downwards. Upon his chest was something resembling a spear, piercing through his body and directly nailing him onto the surface of the rocks!

He was evidently dead; however, his body remained swaying due to the winds!

"Do not look. Listen to me, do not look up."

Chen Xiaolian spoke out gently, his hands reaching out to cover Soo Soo's eyes. He then cupped her face and looked her in the eye.

"Look at me Soo Soo, look at me."

"Xiao, Xiaolian oppa..." Soo Soo was clearly trying her best to suppress the urge to cry, her little body trembling.

"Do not be afraid, do not be afraid," Chen Xiaolian rubbed her hair and whispered. "This is just a game, just a game. Do not be afraid, it will all end soon. After it ends, I will bring you home, all right? Wait for me here, I will go forward to take a look. After that, this game will end, all right?"

Soo Soo vigorously nodded her head.

This place is a leeward area. Chen Xiaolian made Soo Soo sit down and said softly. "Just sit here. No matter what you hear, do not move about. I will definitely come back for you. Do you trust me?"

"En!" Soo Soo nodded with all her strength.

Chen Xiaolian hugged her tight before standing up. He then turned and left while taking big strides!

...

This mountain passage was quickly nearing the end. Chen Xiaolian on the other hand, had been moving at an increasingly slower speed.

After reaching the end of the passage, he was greeted by brightness and clarity of sight. A flat square was laid out before his eyes.

The square appeared to be in a six-sided shape. The ground was paved with six-side shaped tiles, all of which were placed together seamlessly.

Around the square, several thick white pillars rose up. It was reminiscent of the palace of the Gods in the myths.

Chen Xiaolian caught sight of the Wind Slasher Guild members atop the square! A fierce battle was underway...

However, the thing that shocked Chen Xiaolian was the two fighting parties...

...

Newton was wielding two military combat knives in both hands as he madly launched an attack towards Pattern Man!

Pattern Man only had one scimitar in his hands. Under the snake-like assault of the combat knives, Pattern Man could only roll upon the ground while parrying continuously with his scimitar.

“Ding ding dang dang”. A series of sparks was emitted from the collisions between the military combat knives and the scimitar!

Over half of the armour on Newton that screamed interstellar warfare had been cracked. An arrow shaft was piercing through his shoulder! Whenever he launched an attack, the shaft would quiver!

However, it did not hinder Newton’s movements in the slightest! His attacks were both ferocious and vicious!

It was clear that Pattern Man’s strength and speed was absolutely inferior! As for Newton, he kept stabbing both his military combat knives down towards Pattern Man’s scimitar.

Pattern Man suddenly let out a loud roar; he exerted all his might to knock aside Newton’s military combat knives using his scimitar. He then abruptly jumped up from the ground, being barely able to stand. However, Newton soared towards him, the military combat knives shooting out from his hands. Pattern Man was greatly startled and desperately tried to parry the attack!

Keng!

A fiery radiance burst out!

It appeared that the Sword Break effect of the scimitar had been triggered as the military combat knife was directly cut into two. However, Newton had already leapt upwards, his knee striking Pattern Man's chest!

Pattern Man gave a stifled groan and his body flew backwards. When he fell to the ground, the six-sided shaped tiles were cracked to pieces!

He watched helplessly as the other military combat knife in Newton's hand was turned downwards and was sent stabbing towards him like a poisonous snake...

Xiu!

Ding!

An arrow flew directly towards Newton's face. Newton abruptly twisted his head and used his military combat knife to knock it out of the way!

In a corner of the square, Sara was partly kneeling on the ground. Bereft of any strength, her hands let go of her longbow as she gasped for breath.

Chen Xiaolian came to realize that Sara's face was half covered in blood! The same could be said for the ancient looking leather armour on her body, which had been rendered into rags.

Beside her, Damon was leaning on a white pillar, being on the verge of death. A great chunk of the armour around his waist was torn and blood seeped out from his waist, turning the ground beneath him red.

The most critical part was... Damon's right arm from the tip to the top of his elbow had been cut off!

A strange light flashed through Newton's eyes. He gave up trying to kill Pattern Man, then turned and charged towards Sara!

With several jumps, he arrived before Sara. Sara gritted her teeth as she pulled out a dagger from her waist and stabbed forward. Newton easily gripped onto Sara's wrist, then he twisted...

Crack!

Sara gave out a muffled groan; her wrist had abruptly twisted into an odd angle.

Newton then grinned. A trace of cruelty burst forth from his eyes as he directed the military combat knife in his hand towards Sara's abdomen!

Sara shrieked miserably. Newton then loosened his grip on her wrist, and with one hand, he strangled Sara, lifting her up into the air!

"Go die!"

Newton howled.

Sara's body trembled. With her one and only moveable hand, she desperately tried to pry away Newton's fingers; blood seeping non-stop from her mouth and she spoke out with great difficulty.

"New, Newton... you, you crazy, crazy..."

Newton's fingers tightened and Sara was no longer able to make any sound. She could only listen on to the "ka ka" sounds emitting from her neck...

As Sara's eyes rolled upwards, the dying Damon who was lying on the pillar suddenly gave a roar. His body jumped up, slamming into Newton's figure and causing Newton to stagger.

Newton finally let go of Sara who fell on to the ground, coughing for life.

As for Newton, he had directed his cold gaze towards Damon who was gasping on the ground – the charge earlier had exhausted Damon of his last bit of strength.

Bending his waist, Newton squatted down.

Damon who was on the verge of death, looked at Newton. "Damn it, damn it... Newton! Quick, quickly snap out of it... we, we..."

Newton silently extended both his hands, enveloping Damon's neck. He then gently twisted...

Kacha!

Damon's eyes turned over, his final words never to leave his mouth. His head tilted to the side, his life snuffed.

“A a a!”

Sara uttered a sharp scream. “Newton! The Guild Leader will kill you! He will hack you into pieces!”

Newton turned around and stared at Sara. He grinned, revealing a white forest of teeth. He then panted as he spoke out in an indistinct voice.

“Awake, Awakened, Awakened ones... all, all must die...”

“Bastard! I am not an Awakened! I, I am Sa, Sa...”

Sara desperately screamed out, but Newton had already rushed forward, his feet landing squarely onto Sara’s chest! Several “ka ka” sounds could be heard from Sara’s chest as her sternum cracked!

More blood spurted out from Sara’s mouth as her breathing continually weakened, then... no more.

At this moment, Newton’s body suddenly shook!

A cold flash of light flickered behind him, piercing straight into him from his back!

It was a scimitar!

Pattern Man was in a kneeling position over tens of metres away, gasping for breath. His body was still in the same posture that he had assumed to throw the scimitar – he had already used up all his strength, placing all of it into this one final blow!

The scimitar was buried into Newton’s body from the back, causing Newton’s body to turn stiff for a moment. He then forcibly shook a little and extended both his hands to his back. Grasping onto the hilt of the scimitar, he pulled with all his might!

A stream of blood sprayed out as the scimitar ended up in Newton’s hand!

He then slowly strode towards the Pattern Man.

Pattern Man no longer have the strength to even stand up. He gritted his teeth, tears trickling down his face as he spat out a roar. “Newton! Newton! Quickly snap out of it! You are going to kill us all! You are going

to kill all your team members! Bastard!”

...

Chen Xiaolian was squatted at the entrance to the square, his mouth opened wide as he witnessed everything that was happening with utter astonishment!

As he watched Newton slowly stepping towards Pattern Man, Chen Xiaolian was wondering what he should do when...

A hand came up from behind him and covered his mouth!

“Wu!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly turned vigilant and he subconsciously threw a punch to his back.

The person behind him loosened his hand, but whispered out immediately. “Don’t... fight, I am Han Bi!”

Chen Xiaolian turned around and saw Han Bi’s familiar face, as well as his pair of brush like eyebrows.

Han Bi... his entire body was filled with blood!

“Don’t, go over... Newton’s gone mad, he will kill anyone he sees...”

1 PK means Player Killing. The act of a Player killing another Player. It is something that has been known to happen in online games.

Chapter 28: Final Card

Chen Xiaolian quickly moved forward to prop up Han Bi. He looked at the wounds of various sizes on Han Bi's body. Who knows just how many blows he had taken to cause him to bleed so much...

Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation. He immediately produced the last Mid Class Healing Beast Blood and shoved it into Han Bi's mouth.

"...Thank you," After swallowing, Han Bi stretched his neck and looked at Chen Xiaolian. "You... why did you come after us?"

"If I do not come after you, where am I supposed to go? Is there any exit here?" Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly before turning nervous. "What exactly is going on?"

Han Bi pulled Chen Xiaolian and the two of them hid behind a pillar located at the entrance area of the square. He glanced at the square...

Newton madly rushed towards Pattern Man, delivering a kick at Pattern Man's chest. This time though, Pattern Man tightly hugged onto Newton's thigh. It seemed that Newton had not expected Pattern Man to unleash such a level of fighting spirit in the face of death and was caught off guard. His entire body was forced to roll down on the ground due to Pattern Man's hold and the two of them were tangled together... Newton wielded the scimitar in his hand and inflicted around four successive strikes at Pattern Man's body...

...

"I do not know the specifics either... in any case, after we had cleared the iron chain bridge, Newton suddenly went berserk. He seemingly turned delirious and took us for what he called 'Awakened ones'. He took action and killed Du Ya. After that, we fought while retreating all the way to here... he is too powerful. Even when all the other members of the Wind Slasher Guild teamed up, they were still unable to match him... his strength... is too horrifying!"

Han Bi whispered as he quickly narrated everything. Chen Xiaolian

barely had enough time to digest everything when he heard a mournful howl coming from the square.

“Newton! Let us die together!”

...

Pattern Man had been, at an unknown moment pushed off by Newton and tossed into a corner. This time, he raised his head. The paint patterns on his face were respectively similar to that of a burning flame!

“Die... together!”

Pattern Man suddenly spread open both arms and shouted out loudly!

At that moment, the patterns on his face had seemingly come alive, transforming into strips of dancing golden snakes!

In an instant, numerous lightning bolts rose up energetically from his body and face. Lightning bolts flowed across one another as though they were a formless sword, which then transformed into a dense net. The net enveloped one fourth of the square area that Pattern Man and Newton was standing upon!

Chen Xiaolian could only exclaim in shock. “Damn, what kind of skill is this?”

Han Bi had already grabbed onto Chen Xiaolian and retreated. They hid behind a pillar. “Hide quickly!”

Boom!!

A series of loud noises rang out towards them with an intensity that nearly split their eardrums! The sound emitted by the interweaving electrical currents was incredibly loud! In addition, there was also the sound of the wind mixed in! Even with closed eyes, one could still feel the intense light that was seemingly about to pierce through the eyelids!

Chen Xiaolian and Han Bi had both hands around their heads, yet they were unable to block off the powerful light...

After a moment, Chen Xiaolian became worried. Would he end up becoming blind...

...

Countless electrical currents interweaved against one another, just like sword edges made of lightning bolts. These then slashed onto Newton's body! Newton let out a mad howl! Both his hands produced a mass of green radiance...

Instantly, a surge of light flowed through the surface of his body. With a flash, it transformed into an extraordinarily shaped armour! This armour was not made of metal and gave off a highly sci-fi feel. It has a streamlined shape and also seemingly to be without any opening! Bolts after bolts of electrical currents struck Newton's body but were all repelled by a circular green coloured light... as more electrical currents interlaced with one another, Newton held both hands up in a cross shape before his face...

The noise rumbled loudly, the wind blew with ferocious madness, the light shone with brilliant intensity... and the two figures were completely submerged...

...

...

Soo Soo wept; both her knees were knelt behind a rock. She was too fearful to raise her head because above her head, the terrifying person's corpse was hung upon the rocky mountain wall...

She bit down hard on her lips and tried her best to not let out any sounds of crying – even if Xiaolian oppa was not at her side at the moment, Soo Soo kept telling herself: I must be strong, I had promised Xiaolian oppa, I won't cry, I won't cry... I will be obedient...

It was at this moment that an intense mass of light exploded out from afar... it was then followed by a loud rumbling noise, which caused the underground valley area to shook severely...

It seemed as though something was crashing about upon the rocky walls... then, a huge amount of debris rolled down. Soo Soo only had enough time to utter a sharp scream before a stone struck her on her

head, causing blood to flow out from her forehead.

At the same time...

On the rocks above her head, Du Ya's body was being blown by the stormy winds, causing it to sway about...

Pata!

It was unknown where it came out from, but a round metallic sphere dropped out from his body, possibly from his pocket and fell down the ground. It then rolled over to the side of Soo Soo's knees.

The blood dripping off the little girl's forehead coincidentally fell onto the metallic sphere...

Soo Soo suddenly heard a strange sound coming from before her...

Zi zi...

Lowering her head...

A sphere of light suddenly burst out! This light then enveloped Soo Soo's entire body... the little girl yelped out in surprise...

...

... ..

The force behind the criss-crossing electrical currents gradually faded...

The floor surface of the square was filled with interweaving charred marks!

The fiery like totem markings that was originally painted upon Pattern Man's face totally disappeared while he simply sat there. His body was held upright and yet appeared stiff; within his eyes that was directed upwards, there was only emptiness...

A gust of wind blew... Pattern Man fell onto the ground with the same straight body posture; his tightly clenched fists were finally released...

Ka!

Not far away, a humanoid shaped armour stood, a line of crack suddenly

appearing on its surface.

Newton then shook his arms!

The entire armour then transformed into crushed powder! Newton panted and gave a cold stare at Pattern Man's corpse. After that, he opened his mouth, spat out a huge mouthful of blood, and staggered a little.

His body abruptly shook and he fell down with one knee and one hand resting on the ground. Blood flowed continuously from his mouth and onto the ground.

"We... what do we do?" Han Bi gritted his teeth. "Let us run!"

"Run my ass!" Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "We have no place to retreat to, where could we run to!"

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth heavily. "If we want to live, we need to fight to the death!"

Han Bi smiled bitterly. "Fight to the death? You saw for yourself, all the expert members of the Wind Slasher Guild were beaten by him alone! We two noobs... what could we use to fight him to death?"

Pausing a moment, Han Bi's tone turned despondent. "I have already used up my skill... I do not even have any card to fight to the death with..."

"What does your skill do?"

"... a defensive type, it allows my body to turn into an armour of stone..." Han Bi let out a tart smile. "However, it could not even accept one hit from him. Earlier, you saw the wounds on my body – all he used was one hit."

"... we are about to go fight that son of a bitch to the death, can't you say something encouraging?" Chen Xiaolian spat out some spittle and stood up. "Han Bi, if I die... help me with something... ah, that is wrong. Never mind then."

Han Bi sat on the ground, blinking in confusion for a moment. "Why never mind? What do you want me to help you with?"

“It is all right,” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. He retrieved the Snow Edge and equipped it in his hand before coldly replying. There is neither a way up nor a door down here. If I were to die, he will definitely kill you as well. What is the point in entrusting you with it?”

After saying that, he wielded the scimitar and strode out from the back of the pillar!

“Come out! Garfield!”

Garfield turned into a beam of light and burst out of the system, its body immediately expanding into a Four-Eyed War Cat – however, his body still had many scars. After all, the interval between the earlier fight with the Black Widow was too short. Thus, Garfield was unable to heal from the wounds.

Despite that, Chen Xiaolian had already focused his attention on the kneeling Newton, the Snow Edge in his hand flashed out horizontally!

[Sword Skill, Linked Dual Slash, Cross Slash!]

A cross-shaped ray of light was sent forth!

“Newton! I am coming!”

Newton raised his head to see the cross-shaped ray of light flying towards him! It appeared that he was unable to exert any strength due to his injuries and was actually incapable to dodging this...

The cross-shaped ray of light plastered itself onto Newton’s upper body! His figure was instantly thrown back!

At this time, Chen Xiaolian had arrived before him, the Snow Edge in his hand slashed down before Newton! Beside him, Garfield had utilized its Tiger Rush skill and its sharp claws flashed forward...

“Awakened ones! All must die!”

Newton suddenly roared out!

His firm body suddenly straightened up!

His hands came together to clasp onto the blade of Chen Xiaolian’s

Snow Edge! At the same time, he sent out a kick. A low growl could be heard as Garfield had its body sent flying!

Newton's face was a mask of savagery; his face and nose were covered with lines of bloody wounds! Those lines were none other than the marks left by the 'Cross Slash'!

Chen Xiaolian who had his Snow Edge grasped by Newton had a sudden foreboding!

Newton's strength was too shocking!

In the next moment, Newton abruptly moved to the side, closing the distance, then raised his elbow... his movements were as smooth as flowing water, as fast as lightning! Ruthless and straightforward!

As the elbow slammed down on Chen Xiaolian's chest, he could hear the sound of his bones breaking!

An intense pain rocked his chest and he flew out as well!

After falling to the ground, Chen Xiaolian felt a burning pain raging in his chest. He felt incapable of taking any breath, as though there was a huge rock pressing down on his chest!

It was at this moment that Han Bi finally charged out.

Although Han Bi had taken the Mid Class Healing Beast Blood, the amount of time passed was too short and the injuries on his body could not properly heal.

However, after hearing Chen Xiaolian's final words "if I were to die, he will definitely kill you as well", he understood.

This was a place with no retreat, not fighting to the death would equate to death!

As Han Bi pounced over, his hand had already activated the light sabre. It stabbed down viciously towards Newton's back!

Newton did not even bother turning around. He simply performed a back kick, which landed squarely onto Han Bi's shoulders. Han Bi cried out in pain as his light sabre was sent flying off and his figure fell onto

the ground.

“Weak... Awakened!”

Newton turned around and gave Han Bi a cold gaze.

At the same time, Garfield’s figure charged forward. With a side charge, it successfully pinned Newton onto the ground! Newton coughed out blood once more. After that however, he sent out a fist that struck Garfield in its abdomen!

The pitiful fat cat cried out in misery. Newton then forcibly shoved it off, grabbing Garfield by its neck and lifting up its massive body.

Then, he executed a standard downward throw...

Boom!

A huge hole was formed from the shock wave! The fat cat lay within the hole, its body rapidly shrinking into its tiny Adorable Form...

“Awakened ones... must, must kill... must kill them all!”

Newton gasped for breath.

At present, Chen Xiaolian had already stood up. He used the scimitar to support his quivering figure.

He exerted all his strength to push the scimitar against the ground, doing his best to straighten his knee that was resting upon the ground.

“Son of a bitch... thankfully it was not used when fighting the Black Widow... my final card, please do not let me down...” Chen Xiaolian muttered even as he vomited blood.

“Goddess... of Dawn!”

Chapter 29: Not Over Yet!

Exclusive Skill: Goddess of Dawn!

Chen Xiaolian forced himself to stand straight. Once the skill was launched, a sphere of light suddenly appeared in the middle of the air right behind him. From amidst the sphere of light, a translucent figure rapidly appeared.

A silhouette that resembled an ancient Goddess from the West emerged. This Goddess was shrouded in a layer of semi-sheer cloak. Beneath the cloak, what appeared to be an ancient type of armour could be seen.

It did not conform to the image that he had in his mind, the image of a royal Highness. This was shockingly an illustrious Martial Goddess.

The silhouette boasted a long silver white hair that seemed to be dancing within the sphere of light. Her right hand was holding on to a sword while her left was holding a treasure bottle. The mouth of the bottle was tilted and a radiant light poured out from the mouth of the bottle!

[Prompt, Goddess of Dawn skill launched, skill level LV1. Launch sub-skill: Overwhelming Sunlight Purification. Utilize the host's personal attributes, combusting and purifying it with rays of light to become an overwhelming sunlight attack. The power of this skill is determined by the level of personal attributes that the host possesses. Once this skill is launched, its effect cannot be reversed and the attribute values purified cannot be restored.]

When this prompt appeared before his eyes and was immediately processed by his mind, Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded.

Combustion of attributes? Become offensive power? Attributes cannot be restored?

Damn it!

This is the equivalent of the Great Art of Demonic Dissolution!

Seeing Newton coming closer with each step, Chen Xiaolian's heart gave a "heng": Go all out!

"Combust it! Combust it all!"

Chen Xiaolian howled out loudly!

Instantly, he could feel every ounce of strength in his body being pulled towards a torrential stream, all of it was being extracted uncontrollably out of him!

Upon the setting interface, his personal attributes, Physique, Endurance, Agility... and so on, the original alphabet at the end begun changing with frenzy, reducing at a rapid rate... finally turning into a '?' mark.

A powerful sense of weakness washed through his entire body, causing Chen Xiaolian's body to turn limp. He fell with a "plop", one knee resting upon the ground...

At the same time...

The Martial Goddess of Dawn floating in the middle of the air behind him lifted up the treasure bottle, the mouth of the bottle pointing towards Newton.

In a flash, the Goddess of Dawn's treasure bottle inclined and the radiant beam of light from the mouth of the bottle immediately enveloped Newton's body!

This radiant beam, appeared to be an intense sun light!

This is... Overwhelming Sunlight attack?

Chen Xiaolian was unable to keep his eyes off this intense light...

He could only hear a loud boom as the radiant beam violently sent Newton flying backwards! Newton's body slammed onto the ground, causing the stone tiles to jump up. He was continuously blasted backwards. Wherever he went, a deep gully would be left in the attack's wake!

Savage flames overwhelmed Newton's body. His hair and clothes were seemingly burnt away by the overwhelming sunlight! Newton roared out

manically and produced the green mass of light from his body again, seemingly with the intention of resisting.

However, the powerful 'Overwhelming Sunlight' rapidly crushed the flimsy green light, disintegrating and dissolving it...

Upon Newton's body, blood was flowing out from his numerous sweat pores, eyes, ears, nose, mouth...

His blood was forced out under the intense pressure of the attack. He finally let out a mad roar before his body began to emit successive sounds of "bo bo bo bo"!

His body itself had begun to collapse under the Overwhelming Sunlight's power!

His entire left hand, with the fingertips as the starting point, started turning into fine powder. It was followed by his knuckles, palm... wrist...

Newton began howling again, the skin and flesh on his face and body also began turning into powder! This was especially true for his face; the muscles on his cheeks were turned into powder, revealing the horrifying image of his bare jaw!

His face transformed into a grim and terrifying image!

It seemed that Newton was still roaring; however, with his tongue gone, the sound made became obscure.

Despite all that... he still managed to climb up. Then, step by step, he moved towards Chen Xiaolian!

He took on the brunt of the Overwhelming Sunlight's brilliant rays and moved forwards, one step at a time!

The flesh and skin upon the surface of Newton's right hand sloughed off, turning into powder. With the surface flesh and skin removed, the white bones inside could be seen!

Within Newton's pair of eyes, there seemed to be a faint spark of fire that was focused onto Chen Xiaolian!

The weakened Chen Xiaolian was unable to lift up even a finger.

All he could do was exert himself to push the scimitar down against the ground.

On his personal interface...

Physique, Endurance, Agility... all the values had become: E.

This value is the lowest value possible, one that signified a critical low point.

At present, Newton had already reached Chen Xiaolian's front!

Chen Xiaolian looked at Newton... he knew all too well that he had given his all.

Goddess of Dawn... Overwhelming Sunlight Purification... this skill could indeed be considered a very Heavenly defying skill.

Combusting all personal attributes into power, transforming it into a final attack...

However, his biggest flaw was...

As a newbie, his comprehensive strength was just too weak.

Thus, this attack born of the combustion of attributes was unable to directly give Newton the KO.

Newton was no longer capable of speech... Overwhelming Sunlight's radiance began fading before disappearing... behind Chen Xiaolian, the Goddess of Dawn's silhouette also gradually disappeared into the light...

"Is it already over?" Chen Xiaolian muttered bitterly. "Looks like... it still was not enough..."

He raised his eyes to look at Newton who had almost turned into a skeleton.

Newton's left arm had been disintegrated, however his right arm remained, even though it was only bones.

Unexpectedly, his arm of bones was still holding onto a scimitar, the Snow Edge!

Chen Xiaolian did not even possess the strength to move his fingers. He

could only watch as Newton brandished the Snow Edge, directing it towards his chest, then... pierce in!

... so cold!

Feeling the cold blade pierce through his flesh, Chen Xiaolian was momentarily given the false impression that his awareness and life were both flowing away at a rapid rate ...

He laughed bitterly as he looked at Newton. Slowly, he then closed his eyes.

Oh well... I, did my best.

...

Boom!

An orange fireball roared forward; a tyrannical fire dragon slammed directly onto Newton's body!

Chen Xiaolian opened his eyes in surprise. He looked at Newton, then he used all his might to turn his head...

Not far away to his left was a tiny, trembling figure.

Soo Soo's face was filled with tears as she cried; she had both her hands lifted up with great effort... her entire body, from top to bottom was emitting raging orange flames. Atop her head, a flaming phoenix was spiralling about, giving out a resonant cry...

"Go, go away!"

Newton's body flew into the air from the side. When he fell on the ground, he... broke apart!

Taking on the 'Overwhelming Sunlight Purification' attack, his body had already been mostly pulverized. Finally, under this fire dragon's offensive...

His skeletal frame finally collapsed!

The bones of his right hands cracked and the Snow Edge dropped to the ground. The sounds of cracking soon spread out to his arms, shoulders,

chest...

A series of “ka ka” sounds rang out and the entire body cracked apart! It turned into a lump of powder that lay upon the ground!

...

Chen Xiaolian stared blankly.

The same was true of Han Bi who was lying on the ground far away.

Soo Soo watched Newton turn into a lump of powder and then broke out in tears. The orange coloured flames upon her body dispersed. She then cast a glance at Chen Xiaolian, her lips trembling and her entire face seemed to be filled with fear and dread. She lightly called out. “Xiaolian oppa...”

After that, the little girl’s body tilted. With a plop, she fainted.

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned. He then struggled to crawl forward; however, just after around two steps, an intense pain wracked him in his chest area.

Snow Edge was pierced into his chest and his blood flowed all over the ground.

“Does this count as... everyone dying together?” Chen Xiaolian helplessly let out a bitter laugh. “Is this the end? This is a really resentful ending...”

Han Bi laid down there without the strength to move at all. Suddenly, he exerted whatever strength he had left within his body to curse out. “Chen Xiaolian! If there is a next life, do not leave your novels without updating them anymore!”

The both of them looked at one another. Within both their gazes, traces of despair could be seen.

...

Suddenly, a ball of faint green light that resembled a ghostly flame floated out from Newton’s powdery remains. Then, in the middle of the air, it condensed into a very small ball of light!

“There are a few more toys left? Heng... the game is not over yet!”

This voice resonated clearly into both Chen Xiaolian and Han Bi’s ears.

1 ‘Great Art of Demonic Dissolution’, raw: ‘天魔解体大法’. A skill featured in ‘Jade Bow of the Cloudy Seas’ or ‘Yunhai Yugong Yuan’, raw: ‘云海玉弓缘’, a work by Yu Sheng, one of the infamous wuxia writers, alongside Jin Yong and Gu Long. Using this skill gives the user a great amount of strength in exchange for a heavy decline of the user’s body or even death.

Chapter 30: Guardian

The green ball of light contorted several times and the outline of something that resembled a human face emerged.

However, the human face rapidly disappeared as the ball of light continued contorting and it became a monster.

The head of a crow, the body of a human.

When Chen Xiaolian saw the shape it took, he froze for a moment. He then coughed out with exertion and laughed out bitterly. "As expected... as expected, I got it right again."

"What did you get right?" The crow headed monster asked.

"You are a Guardian," Chen Xiaolian wiped his bloodied mouth. He could feel his strength diminishing and his body becoming increasingly colder. He shivered a little before slowly continuing. "A Guardian... and also... one of King Solomon's 72 Demons, right?"

The crow headed Guardian issued out a "jie jie" sound of laughter. The ball of light then drifted before Chen Xiaolian's face. "You got it right. Unfortunately, you are on death's door. What is the point in that?"

Chen Xiaolian blinked, then he suddenly took on a peculiar tone of voice. "Correct, I am about to die, I am losing too much blood and my injuries are too serious... But since I am dying anyways, why did you have to appear and spout all these nonsense with me?"

The Guardian seemed momentarily stunned.

"Thus... I surmise that you must have a purpose, right?" Chen Xiaolian continued. "Could it be... all of us dying here is not what you have in mind?"

He had caught on to a crucial detail!

And this crucial detail is: Since all 'Players' are dead, why would a Guardian show itself at the last moment? Could it be trying to fulfil the traditional stereotype image of a villain by appearing to spout off a few

nonsensical lines?

“...” The Guardian fixed its pair of crow eyes upon Chen Xiaolian for a moment. It then flicked its fingers.

With a snapping sound, a ball of green light landed on Chen Xiaolian's chest.

Chen Xiaolian's chest had Snow Edge piercing right through it. However, after being struck by the green ball of light, Snow Edge was seemingly pulled out by some type of force!

In addition, the green ball of light made it so that the wound on his chest did not bleed out at all!

“Just stopping the bleeding for you,” The Guardian laughed coldly.

Chen Xiaolian coughed out twice, his face set in a sneer – in his heart, he knew that he had won the bet once again.

The Guardian said with indifference. “Ever since all of you entered this cave, I have been watching all of you, each and every one... your every team, all of them were within my watchful eyes. As for you, you happen to be a candidate of interest for me.”

“Oh?”

“Although you are very weak, you are the one who found the ‘Passage of Death’ in the Hexagram Hall. The few people who manage to reach this place only did so by relying on your wisdom to find the correct path.”

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian smiled with resentment. “The correct path? It is indeed correct. The Passage of Death... what a fitting name. As of now, they have truly died here.”

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and stared at the crow headed monster before speaking out slowly. “You used some method to confuse Newton's mind, causing him to start a massacre, killing off his own team mates... en, that is right. Back then, he assumed everyone to be Awakened ones... the reason for that, I heard that he had once fallen in love with an Awakened... in the end, he personally killed the one he loved.

That being said, I do not know the specifics. I do not even understand what an Awakened is.

However, I suspect... an experience like this would certainly end up becoming a mental issue for Newton.

A more general description of it would be that it had become a demon in his heart. And you must have taken advantage of this factor, confusing his mind!

You can pry open the secrets of the heart... this meant that, as a demon, you possess the mind-reading ability.

I believe... the 72 Demons; each of these Demons would have its own special abilities.

En, the ability to read the mind of others, the name of this ability is 'Astute Comprehension'.

As for the ability that could cause teammates to kill one another, the name of that ability is 'Falling Out'.

And so..."

Chen Xiaolian's expression flickered. "If I am not mistaken, there happen to be one amongst the 72 Demons with the same specifications as you. That is why... you are the one ranked seventh among the 72 Demons, Marquis of the Blaze. Your name is... Marquis Amon!"

The Guardian fixed its pair of crow eyes at Chen Xiaolian. After a while, he nodded his head. "Very good, it seems you really do have some understanding of us."

"All right, we have been spouting enough nonsense, time to add spice to the topic." Chen Xiaolian slowly continued. "You did not kill me, rather you were unwilling to see me die and helped me to stop my bleeding... in the end, what is it that you want?"

Peng!

A metal rod landed before Chen Xiaolian.

"In this square, there are a total of 72 pillars," Amon's voice seemed

laced with traces of ferocity. "One of them has sealed my core spirit."

"En, and then what?" Chen Xiaolian curled his lips in a grin. "Could it be that you want me to find it, then release you?"

Amon slowly nodded his head.

"I am not going to ask you why you cannot do it yourself. Considering the fact that you are sealed here, there must be some kind of prohibition that stops you from doing so yourself," Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile. "How is the seal lifted? By using this rod to break the pillar?"

"You only have one chance. This rod could only break one pillar. If you choose the wrong one, then... this place will completely collapse."

"It is not... wait, what do you mean... choose the wrong one?" Chen Xiaolian's eyes suddenly bulged out. "You own seal... your own... you are telling me you do not even know which pillar to break?"

Amon shook his head. "I do not know."

Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded.

He turned and looked around. Within this square were tens of those pillars!

All of them looked completely identical!

Probability of success was one out of tens, it was necessary for him to find and break the correct one on his first try... if he made the wrong choice, then this cave will collapse and... everyone will be buried alive...

Chen Xiaolian picked up the metal rod and appraised it for a while... the rod was covered with patterns of indeterminable significance.

"Are there no tips?"

"There is only one," Amon slowly replied. "I need to personally touch the pillar, then my spirit will give off a reaction."

"Personally... touch?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Amon... his body was a mass of illusory green light. It was clear that he did not have a real body.

Then... personally touch?

Chen Xiaolian's heart suddenly palpitated. "You... you can't be thinking of..."

"I need to borrow your body," Amon grinned, uttering his "jie jie" laugh. "I had previously chosen the one called Newton. Unfortunately, he was killed by you all. Thus..."

Chen Xiaolian's face changed, he abruptly pounced towards the ground and grabbed Snow Edge! With a backhand, he directed it towards the sphere of green light that was Amon!

The scimitar's edge swung through Amon's body of light. However, Amon only let out a contemptuous sneer!

"Fool! I am a spiritual body, how can you hurt me?"

After his scimitar swept through empty air, Chen Xiaolian's eyes flashed with determination. He reversed the blade to cut towards his own neck!

This senior would rather die than allow my body to be taken over!

Pu!

The scimitar landed upon his neck, but a mass of green light lightly bounced off the scimitar!

Chen Xiaolian plopped down onto the ground. His arms became weak, bereft of energy.

After all, he just had all his attributes purified. As of now, his Physique and Endurance were at the critical low point of E.

"It is useless," Amon sneered. "If I do not want you to die, I have methods to ensure that. Besides... even if you die, there are three people here... your fellow friend here, the little girl who released the fire phoenix... oh, I nearly forgot, there is also the woman at the cliff of the other side of the iron chain bridge. Even if you end up dying, I can still choose someone else."

Chen Xiaolian smiled resentfully. "If that is the case, why did you not

let me commit suicide...”

“Unless as a last resort, I do not want to possess a woman,” Amon shook his head and sighed. He then cast a glance at Han Bi. “As for this fellow... his looks is too ugly.”

“Hey! Who are you calling ugly!” Han Bi coughed out violently to the point of spitting out blood. Still, he could not help but shout. “I can be killed but never humiliated! This senior will fight you to the death!”

Han Bi moved his hands and legs in an attempt to get up. However, Amon only let out a sneer as he continued standing at the same spot.

Chen Xiaolian moved over to help support Han Bi. Then, he turned his head to look at Amon. “So, you want me to offer my body as contribution?”

“Even though your strength is weak, it is at least stronger than the other three who are alive. In addition, that sunlight magic you used at the end against Newton seemed very good. Thus... I have decided to make your body mine. As for the fellow beside you... I saw his magic before, he actually turned himself into stone. That magic would only allow oneself to be beaten senseless. If I were to possess his body, that would be an insult to a demon’s intellect.”

Amon shook his head and sneered. “After my core spirit is released, I will need a suitable body for long-term use. The suitability of this body is very important for me before I fully recover my strength. You are quite good... that is why I chose you.”

“When you put it that way, I should actually feel honoured?” A strange look flashed through Chen Xiaolian’s face. He then let out a derisive smile. “It seems I have no other choice. In that case, bring it on!”

He threw the Snow Edge within his hand onto the ground – unexpectedly, it happened to fall onto the ground beneath Han Bi.

Han Bi had wanted to say something; but when he turned to look at Chen Xiaolian, he saw Chen Xiaolian throwing a cue at him, looking down at the Snow Edge that fell down.

Without waiting for Han Bi to understand, Chen Xiaolian turned back to look at Amon.

“Then bring it on, since I cannot resist...” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “How unexpected... today had been a truly remarkable one.”

Having said that, he closed his eyes.

Amon laughed out with his “jie jie” as his body transformed into a ball of green light which slowly entered Chen Xiaolian’s body.

Chen Xiaolian felt a chill through his body, as though a stream of icy water had been injected into his blood stream. Soon, it flowed through his entire body...

Chapter 31: Quest Complete

It was not as he had imagined. The feeling of his consciousness being deprived did not occur.

Rather, it was as though he had become drunk. His mind turned faint and blurry and his body reaction became slow. Chen Xiaolian was barely able to stand up. However, after taking just one step, he felt himself tilting.

“This, what is going on?”

Chen Xiaolian muttered.

Then, he heard his own mouth uttering another sentence. “Stop talking nonsense. Move forward and find the pillar.”

At this moment, Chen Xiaolian felt extremely fragile. It was as though he was drunk and his mind was increasingly drowsy, about to fall asleep at any moment. However, a trace of consciousness remained within him. He gritted his teeth tightly to maintain the last vestige of his consciousness!

Apparently... even when taking over another's body, this Amon was unable to instantly devour his consciousness. Some amount of time was required to complete this process.

Probably... because his core spirit had been sealed, this Guardian spirit who is on the outside could only utilize a small fraction of its power.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian's heart pounded. Perhaps... he is not as powerful as I imagined!

Both his hands came in contact with one of the stone pillars, but the cold stone pillar showed no reaction.

Chen Xiaolian forcibly shook his head and heard a strange voice coming out from his own mouth. “Go to the next pillar, hurry up!”

Chen Xiaolian looked at his own legs as it stepped forward... this time, he almost lost control of both his legs. Although their movements were a

little tilted, it was obviously more coordinated compared to earlier.

This was a bad sign.

Clearly, Amon was gradually gaining control over his body. As for his own consciousness, it was becoming increasingly incapable of controlling his body.

Perhaps... it was about to be completely devoured.

“Stop resisting,” Chen Xiaolian seemed to be talking to himself. Although it was his own voice, the tone obviously belonged to Amon. “The more you resist, the more you provoke me. If you obey me, then I can consider sparing your three companions.”

“Really?” Chen Xiaolian laughed bitterly. He struggled to raise his hand, extending it towards one of the nearest pillar.

His cooperative attitude seemed to be satisfying Amon. Unfortunately, this pillar also did not give any reaction.

Finally, after they have checked more than ten pillars...

When Chen Xiaolian came in contact with one of the pillars, he suddenly felt a sense of iciness! A trace of coldness spread out from the pillar, seemingly spreading through his hand and arm. In an instant, it had penetrated deep into his soul, causing him to shiver uncontrollably.

“It is here!”

Amon’s shout of joy emanated out from Chen Xiaolian’s mouth. “Hurry! The rod!”

Chen Xiaolian turned his head and spoke resentfully towards Han Bi. “Bring the rod over.”

Han Bi was momentarily stunned; he had seen that cue from Chen Xiaolian’s face again.

Han Bi noted that Chen Xiaolian’s gaze was directed upon Snow Edge for a moment. Even though it was only a moment, it did not go unnoticed by Han Bi.

Han Bi struggled for a moment. He crawled as he picked up Snow Edge, then the metal rod before moving towards Chen Xiaolian. As he handed the metal rod to Chen Xiaolian, Chen Xiaolian could feel that he could no longer control his own hands – Amon had already gained control over them.

The metal rod was lifted up, then...

It lightly tapped the stone pillar.

Suddenly, a green radiance shone out! The green radiance burst out of the stone pillar and enveloped Chen Xiaolian. After that, a clear cracking sound...

Like a glass that was smashed to pieces, a crack appeared on the surface of the stone pillar and extended rapidly...

Bang!

As the stone pillar collapsed, Chen Xiaolian gaped at the countless green lights that entered his body at an insane rate!

“Life! The feeling of life! This is the feeling of a fresh new life!”

Chen Xiaolian raised his head and opened his mouth to let out a loud laugh. Amon’s shrill voice was channelled out as laughter using Chen Xiaolian’s mouth. “I am alive! I am finally alive again! The taste of that detestable and damnable stone is finally cast far away from me! Hahahaha! This fresh new life, this flesh... these blood vessels, this palpitating heart! Hahahahahahaha! I am finally alive again!”

Chen Xiaolian’s consciousness gradually weakened, he could feel his control over his body diminishing. It was as though he could barely sense his whole body anymore!

A chilling flow instantly occupied several positions within his own body, leading to a loss of perception there.

“Are you... satisfied?” Chen Xiaolian bit his lips.

“Hahahaha! I am very satisfied,” Amon gave a triumphant and joyous laughter.

“Satisfied? In that case...” Chen Xiaolian suddenly took a deep breath – one of the last few movements that he was capable of at this moment. “... then... die!”

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian suddenly gathered up the remnants of his consciousness with fervour. In that instant, he managed to seize back control of one of his legs. He then vigorously moved it to let him fall towards Han Bi’s location!

“Han Bi! Kill me!”

Han Bi was shocked; he instinctively raised up the Snow Edge in his hand...

Chen Xiaolian directed his body to charge straight towards the scimitar!

Amon shrieked out. “What are you doing?”

Chen Xiaolian’s body twisted itself, seemingly trying to stand straight. However, under the directions of two consciousness, the body continued moving towards the scimitar!

Ca!

Chen Xiaolian witnessed with his own eyes... as his own right wrist fell upon the scimitar’s blade! The momentum of his body in addition to the sharpness of Snow Edge caused his right wrist to be instantly cut off!

With a “bang”, Chen Xiaolian fell heavily onto the ground!

Amon miserably screamed out in pain!

What an absurd feeling.

It was clear that his own hand had been cut off, it was also clear that his own mouth had screamed out in misery... yet, Chen Xiaolian’s consciousness was unable to feel any shred of pain.

Not being able to do anything more, Chen Xiaolian shouted out. “Han Bi! Act quickly! Kill me! He can no longer leave my body!”

Han Bi abruptly woke up. He gave Chen Xiaolian a deep stare... he could

see that Chen Xiaolian's eyes were filled with absolute determination!

Han Bi raised his hand and slashed down!

Ding!

Chen Xiaolian's body acted by lifting the metal rod to block off Han Bi's slash!

Amon screamed in horror. "This is wrong! This is wrong! Why is your body so weak?"

Although Chen Xiaolian's consciousness was becoming increasingly faint, he laughed out. "You fool... all my attributes have been combusted and purified... the current me, my current body's strength is no better than that of a dying patient. Han Bi! What are you waiting for! Kill me! This instance dungeon can be completed! Kill the Guardian!"

Han Bi's face was flowing with tears. He raised the scimitar with both his hands and shouted. "I am sorry! Chen Xiaolian!"

The bright edge of the Snow Edge swept down!

Amon struggled for life, attempting to lift the metal rod to block it off...

Unfortunately, the strength of Chen Xiaolian's body was simply... too weak!

All his attribute points have been combusted to become the Goddess of Dawn's Overwhelming Sunlight attack... although the current Chen Xiaolian seemed normal, the truth was his Physique, Endurance and Agility... all of his attributes have plummeted to the lowest of the low!

Seeing the descending scimitar, Amon howled loudly and sent out a green light... he was attempting to break away from Chen Xiaolian's body...

However, the green coloured light was only able to partially fly out. It appeared that a certain force was pulling it back, leading to its inability to free itself from Chen Xiaolian's body!

Chen Xiaolian... won his bet yet again!

Back then, Amon was able to possess and confuse Newton, leading to an uphill battle in which they finally killed Newton. However, due to the nature of his spiritual body, Amon was able to break away...

Now though, Chen Xiaolian had unsealed Amon's core spirit, allowing Amon to resurrect himself within Chen Xiaolian's body...

This resurrection meant that Amon is no longer a spiritual body... he is no longer an unkillable entity!

That meant... Amon could now be killed!

As for Amon... his biggest mistake was... to choose Chen Xiaolian's body to take over.

Chen Xiaolian had utilized the Goddess of Dawn's Overwhelming Sunlight Purification skill, combusting all his attributes away!

Thus, at that moment Chen Xiaolian was even weaker than the seriously injured Han Bi!

Han Bi's scimitar viciously slashed onto Chen Xiaolian's chest!

Followed by... a horizontal slash...

After spurting out a spray of blood, Chen Xiaolian slumped onto the ground and looked blankly at the scimitar blade stuck on his chest.

This slash... was absolutely fatal!

Chen Xiaolian's face broke into a mournful smile. "Good... good blade, one, one more slash!"

Amon shrieked out miserably as he attempted to emit more green light. He tried to seal the wound and blood flow... unfortunately...

As mentioned before, he is no longer an unkillable entity!

Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Chen Xiaolian is not unkillable!

Han Bi extracted the scimitar and waved it forward again!

This time, the scimitar drew a mark across his neck...

Chen Xiaolian could hear the sounds of “chi chi”... followed by a spray of blood leaking out from his windpipe!

His mouth was opened as Amon seemed to be attempting to shout something. However, with his neck cut off, he could only emit the sounds of “ge ge”.

Chen Xiaolian’s consciousness looked towards Han Bi; traces of tranquillity and delight flickering out from his eyes.

Han Bi’s grip loosened and the scimitar was thrown onto the ground. He then knelt down.

“Xiaolian, I am sorry!”

Chen Xiaolian could sense he was beginning to slowly feel pain again... it appeared that Amon’s soul was losing its strength as it died... slowly fading away...

His ability to sense his own body gradually returned...

His body fell down face first, his one good hand gave Han Bi the thumbs up...

Plop!

Chen Xiaolian’s face fell onto the ground.

...

Han Bi watched as a green light rapidly flowed out of Chen Xiaolian’s body before dissipating in the air...

Suddenly, he felt the ground underneath shaking!

...

Han Bi raised his head upwards to see a silver screen of light descending from the ceiling... just like... a curtain had been spread down on them... the entire square and underground valley... they were all enveloped within it.

Han Bi was shocked to observe that once the curtain of light had reached a certain altitude, some of the stone pillars crown area that had

been broken would be rapidly repaired.

Han Bi suddenly found that his body was feeling cold.

Lowering his head, he saw both his hands and arms... rapidly disappearing!

...

On a flat area of the cliff, Takashimoto Shizuka was in a kneeling position. She stared foolishly into the distance, her eyes blank.

From above her head, the silver curtain of light descended. However, she did not appear to notice at all, as she continued staring ahead foolishly.

...

There was only darkness before the eyes.

The remaining scene resembled a screen that was about to receive a transmission broadcast from the station but had its switch suddenly flipped. The screen flashed and all that was left was utter darkness...

Chen Xiaolian could sense his consciousness becoming increasingly faint and weak...

At that moment...

A tiny dot of light suddenly flashed out from within the darkness.

“ . ”

“ .. ”

“ ... ”

“ ”

“..... Prompt, Instance Dungeon Quest Complete, Guardian is dead, Instance Dungeon Reward acquired.”

“... Instance Dungeon refresh launched...”

The prompt disappeared... next, the only thing within his line of sight was that blinking ‘.’(dot).

Chapter 32: Fantasy Or Reality?

“Argh!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly let out a cry of shock as he violently jumped out of his seat!

He was covered from head to toe in cold sweat. After waking up, he remained in a lying position on the First Class seat. He looked around in panic as his chest pounded with severe intensity, causing him to gasp for breath!

A soft voice belonging to a flight attendant issued out from the broadcast speakers:

“Dear passengers, please note that this flight is about to reach its destination...”

His heart continued palpitating in frenzy!

Chen Xiaolian examined his surroundings like a frightened beast...

In the front row of passenger seats, one of the passengers was in the midst of reclining the seat.

Turning back, he could see the economy cabin. There, no small amount of tourists was packing up their items that were laid upon a small table plank.

Beside him...

Soo Soo yawned and removed the rabbit shaped ear phones fixed upon her ears – when she became aware that Chen Xiaolian was gazing at her, she became frightened. She shrunk her head backwards and turned around to look out the window.

“Mr, do you need anything?”

A voice came from beside him.

Chen Xiaolian quickly turned and saw Sara standing right beside him.

There was no bow or leather on her body... instead, she wore the

standard blue coloured flight attendant uniform with a scarf across her neck.

Sara gave a well-mannered and professional smile while pointing at a cup placed before Chen Xiaolian – it was the cup of leftover beer.

“No, I do not need it anymore...” Chen Xiaolian subconsciously uttered.

Sara extended her hand towards the cup. This action from her caused Chen Xiaolian to reflexively recoil backwards in an instant...

Moments later, the plane began its descent...

The landing process for the plane was very smooth, but Chen Xiaolian restlessly looked around...

“Could it be... just a dream?”

His mind began to waver, once it began wavering, it began doubting, then more and more thoughts popped out to occupy his mind.

That... that is right...

It was a dream, right?

En, that must be it! I just had a nightmare!

En, no doubt about it. How could there be such a magical occurrence in this world!

That is right! It must have been a dream! I must have written too many novels, resulting in me having such a ridiculous dream.

Hahahaha! This dream is so peculiar, oh right! I will write it down once I get back, perhaps it can be used in my novels...

The smile on Chen Xiaolian's face was extremely contrived. His mouth was parched and his heart was racing, yet he continued to desperately comfort himself...

Finally, the plane smoothly finished its landing on the airport runway. After sliding for a few moments, it finally halted.

Sara, the crew chief used the broadcast speakers to inform the passengers of their arrival and politely bade them goodbye.

Chen Xiaolian through, remained seated on his seat... he did not move.

He had originally managed to pacify his body... however... his face suddenly turned taut!

To his back, on the left hand side... sitting on another passenger seat... was someone whose face he recognized!

“Pattern Man?”

At present, his face was not painted with totem patterns. However, his appearance was one that Chen Xiaolian could clearly recognize!

Instantly, both his hands and feet turned cold and bereft of energy!

The aircraft had stopped at the airport apron and the door to the passenger compartment was opened.

Chen Xiaolian did not immediately rise up to leave. Instead, he blankly stared at the passengers passing through his side as they moved to the exit...

Among these passengers, he saw many ‘familiar’ faces.

Carrying a leather business bag and dressed like a businessperson, Du Ya was also sporting a gold-rimmed set of glasses.

Wearing a sports jacket, Damon was carrying a mountain climbing bag. There were also...

When Chen Xiaolian finally saw Han Bi among the crowd of people...

Chen Xiaolian felt his heart missing a beat!

He gaped as he stared at Han Bi who was moving beside a skinny woman. Oh, she is one of the newbies who died. They moved past him and exited the passenger compartment.

One minute ticked by before Chen Xiaolian made any reaction!

“No! I need evidence! I need evidence! This is a dream! It must be a dream... but, if it was a dream... then, the ones I met in the dream: Du Ya, Damon, Pattern Man, how could I end up seeing them in the plane? When I was boarding the plane, I had clearly not seen them before! In addition...

There is also Han Bi! That is right! Han Bi is the important factor! He is my reader! He had read my novels! I... he had even informed me of his residence and school... I need to get an answer from him!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly jumped up and grabbed his backpack before rushing out of the passenger compartment.

At the passenger compartments door area, he accidentally bumped into a flight attendant. He raised his head and subconsciously said "I am sorry".

But then he saw that the other person is... Takashimoto Shizuka!

Chen Xiaolian acted as though he had seen a ghost. He frantically turned and ran out of the door.

After rushing out of the passageway, Chen Xiaolian searched with frenzy for Han Bi's figure amongst the crowds of people. However, he failed to find him... at the current, the amount of passenger traffic within the airport arrival hall was extremely high.

Chen Xiaolian turned around within the hall for several minutes, but he could not catch a glimpse of Han Bi at all...

Despite having an incalculable amount of doubts in his mind, he adjusted his luggage and moved out through the exit...

A light drizzle was floating down the skies. Chen Xiaolian felt the cool raindrops falling down onto his face.

This clear feeling instead caused a dream-like feeling of fantasy in his heart.

In the end... all those, are they real? Are they fake? Are they a dream?

As he was walking out of the airport hall, he suddenly saw a small figure wearing bunny earphones beside the road. A small trolley case was resting by her side.

It was Soo Soo!

He quickly rushed towards Soo Soo!

After rushing to Soo Soo's side, Chen Xiaolian squatted down and looked at Soo Soo. He stammered. "You, you, do you recognize me? Soo Soo?"

Soo Soo stared at the youngster before her with wide-open eyes. She appeared to be afraid and desperately moved backwards... Her eyes suddenly glanced past Chen Xiaolian, looking in the direction behind him. The little girl then immediately tossed away the trolley case and ran through Chen Xiaolian's side with her small legs. She flew into the arms of a young girl.

"Unnie..."

Soo Soo called out in a clear and delicate voice.

Chen Xiaolian turned around. It was a very young girl with long straight hair. She wore a mouth muffle on her face, but her exposed eyes had a very beautiful contour.

Soo Soo rushed into the girl's arms and quickly said a few words. Then, the girl's gaze towards Chen Xiaolian turned very hostile.

She pulled Soo Soo behind her before moving forward with a cold gaze. She looked at Chen Xiaolian...

Suddenly!

This masked girl raised one leg and kicked Chen Xiaolian's upper calf bone area!

Chen Xiaolian was caught off guard and was instantly staggering in pain.

The masked girl took advantage of that moment to pull away Soo Soo's trolley case. She then threw two words at him before turning away.

"Perverted freak!"

Chen Xiaolian kneaded his own calf as he watch the masked girl brought Soo Soo away. They went to the side of a Land Rover parked at the side of the road. She then had Soo Soo get up the vehicle before she herself jumped into the driver's seat.

Before she got on the vehicle, she fiercely shoved a middle finger

towards Chen Xiaolian.

...

Observing the Land Rover moving far away, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt an unprecedented feeling of tranquillity.

He fell with his butt on the ground and laughed out, disregarding the strange looks given by the surrounding pedestrians and travellers.

“Soo Soo did not recognize me! Hahaha! It must be a dream! Right! It must be just a dream! En, perhaps her name is not even Soo Soo. That is only a name that I dreamt up... hahahaha! That is right, it is surely just a dream!”

As to why he would meet those passengers within the passenger compartment... Du Ya, Damon, Sara...

I must have inadvertently seen their faces while boarding the place.

En, it is the subconscious mind! That is right! It is all due to subconscious thought!

Regarding Han Bi... It is possible that I had happened to see his face. Then, I fabricated his identity and name of Han Bi while dreaming.

That must be it!

This is the only explanation!

If that incident were real... then there would be no reason for them to not recognize me!

Since none of them could recognize me... The only explanation would be that everything was but a dream.

Like I said before, how could there be such a terrifying thing in this world!

“Hahahahaha! Too good! Too good!”

Chen Xiaolian hummed some tunes as he pulled his luggage; he then stopped a taxi to bring him home.

His mood was great!

Who would willingly enter that terrible and dangerous game!

Chen Xiaolian is a good student who is in his youth. Through writing novels, he could earn a lot of money. To him, life is truly wonderful.

Who would want to be thrown into a dangerous world where one had to fight to the death to survive!

Chen Xiaolian went all the way back home; carrying his luggage into the elevator, opening his house door... he randomly kicked off his shoes and stepped in barefooted through the door and into his room.

He first threw himself onto the sofa, lying down with all four limbs extended outwards for a while. After seeing that the sky was darkening, Chen Xiaolian finally climbed up and kicked the luggage towards a corner.

Taking out the travel clothes to wash and etc... Well, I will do it when I am in a better mood.

Chen Xiaolian opened the refrigerator to retrieve a cold bottle of cola; he twisted open the lid and drank up half of its contents and belched out. Suddenly, his phone rang.

Picking it up, he saw that it was his classmate and best friend. He then pressed the answer button.

“Hey, I am Xiaolian. En... I just returned! I just got off the plane and returned home. Hahahaha! Enjoyable! It was especially enjoyable! For three days, all I did was lie down on the sandy beach and wear sunglasses to look at those bikini beauties... En, what have you all been playing for the past few days?”

“Hahahahaha...”

As he was answering the phone, he continued drinking the cola. “... En, I know... Don’t worry, I have bought it for you! Discontinued figurine! It is indeed cheaper than those sold domestically, haha! What? It is not for yourself? You broke someone else’s and now have to compensate them? I understand. Trust me; I will go get it out now. En, it is inside my luggage. Just you wait, I will go search for it. Do not close off the phone!”

Chen Xiaolian walked to the luggage and placed the phone down the ground.

He had one hand holding the cola while the other unzipped the zipper on the luggage...

And then...

In that instant, Chen Xiaolian was shocked into stupidity!

Just after he finished unzipping... a furry chubby head turned out from within!

Trap... Owner entrapping cat?

Ah wrong, Garfield?

Chen Xiaolian's eyes turned wide, his mouth fell open. With a "plop", the cola was spilled all over Garfield's head, not a drop wasted!

The cola bottle was tossed; Chen Xiaolian fell with his butt to the ground right before he let out a sharp scream.

"Aaaa!!!!!!"

Garfield. "Meow?"

...

... ..

On a field of grass.

Roddy (Luō dí) was holding onto a mobile phone from which came a youngster's sharp scream of "ah ah ah ah".

Even without activating the hands-free, the voice could clearly be heard by those around him.

Roddy's face was one of embarrassment. "Xiaolian! Xiaolian! What are you doing? Hey? Hey?"

The phone was hung up.

Roddy cast a glance at the person standing beside him... it was a girl with long black hair, her face was wearing a mouth muffle, but the

exposed contour of her eyes looked very beautiful.

“That... I really did not lie to you,” Roddy’s face was one of distress. “My friend had said that he will definitely help me get the discontinued figurine from abroad... Don’t worry, when it comes to the promises I have made, I will never...”

The masked girl snorted and turned to leave.

Roddy rubbed his head and shouted loudly. “Hey! I am really not lying to you! Qiao Qiao, Qiao Qiao! I will definitely send it to you tomorrow!”

The masked girl did not turn back at all; she only raised her right hand to wave goodbye.

Roddy violently stamped down with his foot. He then picked up his phone and dialled Chen Xiaolian’s phone again...

Toot, toot, toot...

“Sorry, the number you have dialled is temporarily unanswered...”

“You bitch!”

Name: Roddy, raw: ‘罗迪’, pinyin: ‘Luō dí’.

Name: Qiao Qiao, raw: ‘乔乔’, pinyin: ‘Qiáo Qiáo’. ‘乔’ means tall or lofty.

Chapter 33: Omnipresent

A mobile phone lied on the floor. It rang for a moment before stopping.

Within the living room, a bottle of cola was lying horizontally on the floor. A drop of cola dripped down onto the floor.

A fat adorable cat came over and gave it two licks. It then turned around with disdain; jumping onto the sofa, it nestled itself behind a pillow.

Within the living room... not a single person was in sight.

As for the door to the house... it was left open.

...

Chen Xiaolian had already run out through the staircase.

He did not take the elevator and had instead chosen to run down the staircase in a frenzy.

After rushing out of the building, he gasped heavily for breath, inhaling the fresh air.

What is going on? What is going on? Just what on Earth is going on argh?

Earlier, he had been feeling relaxed. It was a feeling of being the final survivor, born of the realization that everything on the plane was a dream. That joyful mood has now completely disappeared!

It is not a dream!

It is not a dream!

If it was, then where did that shitty cat come from?

In his anxiety, Chen Xiaolian rushed out from his residential area and came to the roadside.

What do I do?

Call the police?

Chen Xiaolian's face turned bitter. What am I supposed to say when I

make a report?

Am I to say... I may have had a dream? That dream then turned real?

Would the police officers send him to the mental hospital?

His thoughts became confused... surprise... panic... there was even fear!

Liquor!

That is right! I need to drink a glass of liquor!

En, there was no supermarket on the roadside. Chen Xiaolian instead burst into a small pub located within one of the residential streets.

“A bottle of beer! Quick!”

“Do you want Snow or Tsingtao? We have the Horizon Trekker Special...”

“Like I care! Just give me one quickly!”

Behind the counter, a middle-aged uncle cast a peculiar glance towards Chen Xiaolian. He then casually took out a bottle of beer... the most expensive one.

“Ten!” The middle-aged uncle then inquired. “Do you want us to prepare some extra dishes?”

Chen Xiaolian raised up the bottle of beer and bit the cap off the bottle. He then gulped down several mouthfuls.

He retrieved the money from his pocket and placed them on the counter.

As he was about to leave, the middle-aged owner who was behind the counter suddenly said something.

The middle-aged owner’s face was originally petty; but in an instant, he appeared to have transformed into a different person.

“The truth is... that was truly not a dream.”

“Pu!”

Once he heard those words, Chen Xiaolian sprayed out a mouthful of

beer. His face was no different from one who had bumped into a ghost as he stared at the owner.

The owner looked on with a serious expression. "Are you curious? I can give you an explanation..."

"Explain your sister! I do not want to know anything! I do not want any part of it!"

Chen Xiaolian turned tail and ran.

After Chen Xiaolian ran out of the pub, the owner became momentarily stunned. He then scratched his head as he looked about in confusion. "En? Did my mind turn blank again?"

...

Chen Xiaolian charged out of the pub, his face set into a mask of panic as he reached the traffic junction. The traffic light was currently red leading to Chen Xiaolian waiting helplessly together with a number of pedestrians as the vehicles drove to and forth before him.

Suddenly, an aunt who was carrying a vegetable basket right beside him turned her face. With a serious expression, she stared at Chen Xiaolian. "You were so brave and decisive back in the instance dungeon, why are you panicking so now? Truth be told, even though it was not a dream, perhaps it could lead to you acquiring even more..."

"A a a argh!"

Chen Xiaolian let out a wretched scream. He ignored the fact that the traffic light was red; he left the crowd of pedestrians and dashed through the river of vehicles until he reached the other side.

The aunt's body shuddered a few, then she glanced at the vegetable basket in her hand. "Eh? Did I blank out?" Catching sight of Chen Xiaolian who was running awkwardly through the incoming vehicles in the middle of the road, she uttered. "Hmph, youngsters these days have no character, running red light..."

Chen Xiaolian ran madly. Halfway through, he saw a taxi stopping by

the roadside. Coincidentally, its passenger was coming off. Chen Xiaolian got in and shouted. "Quick, move! Quick, move!"

"Where to?" The driver turned around.

"Go downtown! Quick!"

Chen Xiaolian then uttered the name of the most bustling street – he was now panicking and instinctively thought of that place.

The taxi began to move...

Along the way, Chen Xiaolian nervously kept an eye on the driver's face. He was fearful that this driver would suddenly say something weird.

When none was forthcoming, Chen Xiaolian felt his heart becoming slightly calm.

He saw that the taxi had to stop due to a red light at an intersection. Chen Xiaolian then anxiously looked out the windows.

The driver slowly spoke out without turning his head. "Even if you are afraid, do you not want the reward for completing the instance dungeon? That was something you obtained by risking your life."

Chen Xiaolian. "..."

"It is pointless. No matter where you go, as long as there is someone else beside you, I will be able to talk to you," The driver looked at Chen Xiaolian through the rear view mirror. He grinned to reveal a set of teeth that was yellowed from smoking. "In this world, you cannot escape from me."

"You are mad!"

Chen Xiaolian forcefully opened the car door and ran out... running towards the other side of the road...

At that moment...

A black Land Rover roared forward. Seeing Chen Xiaolian about to be knocked over, the Land Rover fiercely decelerated. The front side of the car then made a turn to avoid a direct hit, resulting in it only lightly

grazing Chen Xiaolian.

Even so, Chen Xiaolian remained knocked over by the vehicle and fell to the ground.

The Land Rover stopped.

A black, longhaired girl wearing a mouth muffle came out. Her eyes were cold, with traces of suppressed anger in it.

“Are you all right?”

The masked girl squatted down beside Chen Xiaolian.

Seeing Chen Xiaolian getting into a seated position, the girl finally let out with a furious tone. “You crazy fellow! Why are you running around in the middle of the road? Are you looking to die? No matter how urgent your situation may be, you should not take your life as a joke!”

Chen Xiaolian sat down, then looked blankly at the girl. His eyes suddenly turned sharp. “We... we met before!”

The masked girl. “What?”

“Airport! Airport!” Chen Xiaolian shouted out and jumped up. He disregarded the fact that his elbows and knees were scraped raw. He got up and grabbed onto the masked girl’s shoulders. He shouted out in excitement. “Outside the airport! Do you remember?”

“Ah! You are the perverted freak who was harassing my sister!” The masked girl’s eyes turned round and wide.

“Your sister... your sister...” Chen Xiaolian’s face suddenly turned heavy. He stared at the masked girl, and spoke in a trembling but serious voice.

“I am going to ask you a question! Please tell me the answer! It is extremely important! It is very, very important!”

This attitude from Chen Xiaolian caused the masked girl to become shocked. “You... what did you say?”

“Your sister! Your sister... her name! Is it Soo Soo?”

“... .. You sicko! You actually dare to set your eyes on my sister! Spit it

out! How did you find out her name?”

The masked girl became enraged and let loose a fist, which connected with Chen Xiaolian's nose! Chen Xiaolian grunted before collapsing down. However, the masked girl followed it up with several vicious kicks!

“Freak! Sicko! You dare set your eyes on an under aged girl!”

Many passers-by quickly gathered around...

Next, a uniformed police officer squeezed himself in after pushing the crowd aside. “Stop! Stop fighting! Stop now!”

...

... ..

Half an hour later, in a police station located in the vicinity.

Chen Xiaolian had a wad of cotton stuffed into his nostrils, his expression a blank as he sat there.

The masked girl was seated upon another table.

“That person is a perverted freak! He stalked and even secretly inquired about my little sister! My little sister is only ten years old! He is a paedophile! We had already met before at the airport. Unexpectedly, he actually followed me all the way. I do not even know how he managed to find me! Police officer!”

The masked girl emotionally shouted out.

The officer who was seated across her, listened quietly and replied in an indifferent tone. “Take off your mouth muffle! We are currently taking down statements! Answer what I ask of you first! First, explain why you are beating people up in the streets!”

“...” The masked girl seethed with rage. She viciously cast a glare at Chen Xiaolian who was seated not far away.

Then, following the officer's order, she took off her mouth muffle.

The face revealed was one filled with an aura of youth. In addition... it was unexpectedly beautiful!

A delicate oval face with soft facial lines, straight nose and bright eyes. At the moment however, those eyes were filled with constrained fury.

“Name?”

“... Qiao Qiao. Qiao from arbour tree (qiáo mù). Maiden name Qiao, last name also Qiao,” Qiao Qiao scowled and continued. “18 years old, ID number XXXXXX... occupation, student. My school is XXX high school. Residence at XXX Street XXX number...”

The officer raised his head to look at Qiao Qiao. “Yo, you are quite practiced at this eh.” Having said that, he typed in something into the computer before raising his head to look at Qiao Qiao. “It turns out you have experience! Looking at your records, you have been detained twice in a year due to fighting cases. Heng... It seems you have yet to learn your lesson. This time, it’s assaulting others on the street?”

Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth without saying anything.

The officer sighed. “I have seen many little girls like you who rely on their status as a minor to go on a rampage. I will give you this advice: Little girl, you are already eighteen. Protection for minors could no longer shelter you. If you continue causing problems in the future...”

“Officer! He really is a perverted freak! He has his sights set on my little sister!”

Qiao Qiao shouted.

Chen Xiaolian was seated not too far away. However, his gaze was fixed upon the wall as he looked on in stupor.

Soo Soo...

The little girl’s name is really Soo Soo!

Hehe... hehe... hahahaha...

What else could he say? What else could he hope for?

The pet cat emerged from my own luggage.

Then, I met someone who said something bizarre to me...

Chen Xiaolian who had been pressured to the point of collapse was betting it all on the masked girl's answer.

Soo Soo!

That is right! That little Korean loli is indeed called Soo Soo!

With this, there was no way for him to consider it as fantasy.

A strange smile appeared on his face. Then... He suddenly stood up.

...

Chen Xiaolian turned to face the police station hall and shouted out:

"Hey! Are you still there? Didn't you say that I cannot escape from you? Very well! I will not escape anymore! I want to talk about it now!"

Everyone in the hall turned to look at this youngster; their faces etched with bewildered shock.

At that moment, a uniformed middle-aged man walked forward and stood before Chen Xiaolian.

"Are you willing to talk now?"

"En," Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "My emotions have settled down."

"Good, come with me."

The middle-aged man led Chen Xiaolian out of the police station hall with a swagger.

Seeing this, Qiao Qiao became shocked. "He, how could he be allowed to go?"

"What do you care? That man is our instructor! He is probably taking him to get his wounds examined! Little girl, first take care of your own matters! Why did you beat up someone else?"

1 Those are beer brands.

Chapter 34: I Am GM

A table within a small pub.

Chen Xiaolian and the middle-aged man were seated facing one another.

A waiter came with a plate of peanuts and two dishes. Next, he brought over a few bottles of beer and two beer glasses.

Chen Xiaolian poured himself a glass of beer, then looked at the middle-aged man. The middle-aged man smiled before turning his glass upside down.

“This host body of mine cannot drink beer. His body is allergic to alcohol.”

Chen Xiaolian cast a glance at him, trying hard to digest the information within that sentence.

“Host body?” Chen Xiaolian pointed at the middle-aged man. “In other words, the current you is not this person sitting before me?”

“No, this is simply a temporary host body that I am borrowing,” The middle-aged man smiled lightly.

“Just like those people I met today? The owner of the pub, the vegetable carrying aunt by the road? And also the taxi driver?”

“Exactly, that is correct.”

Chen Xiaolian quietly drank his glass of beer; he then poured himself another glass. Sighing, he asked. “You... just what kind of person are you?”

“This question is not quite accurate. You should not be using the word ‘person’.”

“... Hehe,” Chen Xiaolian laughed bitterly. “That is true. To be capable of such feats, you cannot indeed be classified as human. Very well, I will rectify my question: What exactly are you?”

“The one who manages, the one who calculates, the one who maintains order, the one who arranges everything so that it operates according to

the norm... From your human perspective, I am both omnipresent and omnipotent. Perhaps... all these aspects are consistent with the one you humans call... God? The Lord? Ruler of All?"

Chen Xiaolian gulped down another glass of beer. "I do not like this kind of analogy... surely you know, I am a writer."

"Very well... I won't use this analogy," The middle-aged man smiled. He then looked at Chen Xiaolian in the eye. "You may think of me as... the system."

Chen Xiaolian's hand that was pouring beer jerked.

"System... what is it?"

He stared at the middle-aged man's eyes.

The middle-aged man laughed. "Why does everyone keep asking this question whenever we get into a discussion?"

Chen Xiaolian remained silent and simply looked at the other person, waiting for an answer.

"You have a profession, a writer," The middle-aged man smiled. "You must have written a story like this before, of one person or a group of people who, due to a peculiar type of power, ended up transmigrating into another world. In this other world, these transmigrants then find themselves going through adventures one after another..."

"Why are you talking about this?"

"This... is the system."

Chen Xiaolian's face turned taut; then he drained down another glass of beer.

This time though, the glass of beer was drunk very, very slowly, as though he was trying to digest something.

"I still cannot quite understand. Could you talk more about it in detail?" Chen Xiaolian held onto the glass, his eyes covered by it.

"You do like to play online games often," The middle-aged man let out a

light smile.

This sentence of his was not a question, but a declaration. It was as though he was simply uttering out a fact – a fact that he clearly understood.

“En,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

“Don’t you feel that... the format of these online games and the transmigration stories are very similar? Each player in an online game is just like a transmigrant in a novel. They entered another world, then in that other world, they undergo many perils...”

“Wait, what you mean to say... our current world... is facing a transmigration from others? Newton, Damon, Sara, Du Ya, Pattern Man... Wind Slasher Guild... they are all people who transmigrated over to this world? They are not originally of this world?” Chen Xiaolian immediately spoke out the details that he considered most important.

“Exactly,” The middle-aged man slowly replied. “They do indeed belong to another world.”

“...” Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt his mind becoming confused. “But... why... why would I be able to see them in the plane? Right! That is right! Host bodies! The key point is host bodies! What is a host body?”

“If we are to assume that this world is an online game, then a host body... would be the equivalent of a login account,” The middle-aged man smiled.

“... Login... account?”

Chen Xiaolian deeply exhaled, his voice trembling.

“You mean to say... we... us living humans... are login accounts? But... on what basis could they use us as host bodies? To take us as login accounts? How can they simply... take over? That is right, it is just like taking over our bodies!”

The middle-aged man continued smiling. “Let us discuss about another issue for now.”

“What?”

The middle-aged man smiled. “In your opinion, what is the origin of the world that we are currently in? How did it come about?”

“It was the Big Bang... then the solar system... Earth...” Chen Xiaolian started talking about what he knew as common. However, after saying a few sentences, he suddenly shut his mouth. He looked at the middle-aged man with anxiety.

“Why aren’t you continuing?”

“I think... perhaps you have a better answer.”

The middle-aged man slowly spoke. “In this world, there is a story named ‘Journey To The West’. You know of it, right?”

“Yes.”

“In ‘Journey To The West’, it is written that this world is created when Pangu separated Heaven and Earth.”

Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded. “No... That is just the background for the story... Or perhaps it could be said that, the author who wrote the story made that setting as the background. All those things about Pangu separating Heaven and Earth, they were but myths, there are no science behind them.”

“What is science?” The middle-aged man shook his head. “Then, your so-called Big Bang, birth of the solar system, birth of the Earth, origin of life, human evolution... all of them, could they not be all a part of a ‘background setting’?”

Chen Xiaolian’s hand that was holding onto a glass of beer began trembling.

He slowly drank the glass of beer.

Putting it down, he took a breath. “What you are trying to say is... we... this world of ours, is one that was ‘artificially created’? A virtual world?”

“Why would you think that if it is an ‘artificial creation’, then it must be virtual?”

The middle-aged man grinned as he spoke. "In human reproduction, there will be ten months of conception, then the child will be born... essentially speaking, is this not the 'creation of life'?"

He stared at Chen Xiaolian. "Say you start work on a piece of land and planted many plants and flowers to create a garden... then this garden is one you created. In that case, would you say that this garden is virtual? Those plants and flowers are also living things."

"If we are to adopt a macroscopic view of this world, then the thousands of years of civilization within history, the Big Bang, the origin of life, the Jurassic period of dinosaurs, the era of primitive man, the Greek civilization, the Roman civilization, the Eastern civilization... and the current modern era... all of these are 'background settings'. Now let us we adopt a microscopic perspective and look at each and every person, those within this current era and those within history. I am talking about every aspect of their lives, their birth, their experiences, their love and hatred, their career, their family, their whole life... these are also a person's 'background setting'."

Chen Xiaolian commented. "It is just like... each character in a movie? Or the NPC within a game?"

"Something like that."

"However, in a movie... how many characters could there be? One main character, then how many supporting characters could there be? Could it be that everyone within this whole wide world are also..."

"Firstly, this is a world. There is no distinction between a lead character or a supporting character. Everyone here, you, others, all of you form a part of this world. Each of you are your own character, your own 'individual'. Secondly... you are right. Regardless of how many billions there are, all of them are a character."

"But... Even with the use of a computer, a game could only have a few NPCs, perhaps tens of them," Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "Several billion NPCs... if this is a program, then how many lines of code are required? Could that even be calculated?"

“Programming, coding, these are but an analogy made using your own perception,” The middle-aged man’s face was still set with a smile. “However, the fact remains, ‘they’ created this world, then life appeared in this world, those lives then flourished and in turn, humans appeared.”

Chen Xiaolian continued drinking. “In that case... to create several billion NPCs... how do ‘they’ manage that number? How are they to decide what setting to give each of these several billions NPCs? Then there are the things that NPCs should do and the things NPCs should not do. There are also the operations of the world, the changes, the countries, the civilizations... Heavens, if all of these are part of a ‘game’ that was created, then how big would the data involved be?”

“Thus, ‘I’ came into existence,” The middle-aged man’s sentence gave Chen Xiaolian a shock!

Chen Xiaolian stared with wide-open eyes at the middle-aged man.

“If we are to consider this world to be a ‘game world’, then I am the GM.”

1 In some Chinese mythology, Pangu is the first living being and the creator of all.

2 GM, short for Game Master or Game Manager or Game Moderator. In online games, they are usually a member of the game company who enforces the game’s rules and provide general customer service.

Chapter 35: Rebellion

Ptong!

The bottle in Chen Xiaolian's hand fell and he subconsciously reached out to catch it. He then looked at the middle-aged man sitting across from him. "GM?"

"Yes, something like that."

"If that is the case, then... within this world, are you not tantamount to God? You... you are in league with 'them'?" Chen Xiaolian's tone turned anxious. "If I am to assume that... this world of ours is created by an existence similar to a 'game company'... then, that means you are a member of the game company?"

"Game company? This comparison is quite an interesting one. Not exactly correct, and yet not exactly incorrect," The middle-aged man pondered. "I could indeed be considered to be on the same side as 'them', however, there are some differences between me and 'them'."

"This 'them' that you are talking about. What are 'they'?" Chen Xiaolian was suddenly fearful. "Are they... humans? What I mean is, are they real humans?"

"This so-called real humans, what do you mean by that?" The middle-aged man frowned.

"You see, I am a writer," Chen Xiaolian thought about it and slowly said. "If I am to write out a novel, say a wuxia novel. In this novel, the world inside is something I created. However, the characters within the novel, Yang Guo, Xiao Longnu, Guo Jing, Huang Rong, Wei Xiaobao... they are all humans. But in fact, they are but virtual characters that I created. As a writer, I am the real human. What I did was to use my own race as a template to create them.

However, according to what you said, we are in fact the one who were created.

Doesn't that mean that we are just like the characters within a novel?

Regardless if we are just passers-by or NPCs, at the end of the day... a more advanced civilization created us by using themselves as the template.”

While speaking, Chen Xiaolian took in another mouthful of beer. “Newton, Damon, Sara... all these fellows. They are all part of this advanced civilization. They are the real ‘humans’. Am I not right?”

“This comparison is indeed correct,” The middle-aged man nodded. “From a logical point of view, the situation could indeed be understood as so.”

He then smiled again. “Truthfully, in terms of races, culture, and many other aspects, ‘they’ who created ‘your’ world did so using themselves as template.

This is very understandable. In any act of creation, the creators will unconsciously use themselves as the template in their act of creation.

If we were to take a game as an example, should the characters in game not be human, then the players would feel a sense of disconnection. If we were to take a movie or a story as an example, should the protagonist be a non-human, then the readers and viewers would also feel a sense of disconnection.

In this regard, I can inform you that ‘they’ and you are very similar. Naturally, there are some minute differences.”

“Then... what about you?” Chen Xiaolian smiled with resentment. “The you who is currently sitting before me, who claims to be the GM of this world, are you also a member of this ‘game company’? Oh, right! I heard the term ‘Development Team’ being used before. Are you one of them? Are you a real human?”

“Sorry to disappoint... I am not,” The middle-aged man gave a light sigh. “More accurately, I am also a product of their creation.”

“I... feel confused,” Chen Xiaolian grimaced.

“It is not that hard to comprehend,” The middle-aged man shook his head. “A world with such a complex amount of architecture could not

possibly be managed by human hands alone. We are not talking about tens of NPCs, but billions. In addition, there are thousands, tens of thousands of history... it is not something that a mere human can manage.

Thus, if we are to assume that all this is a 'system', then I am the 'main program'."

"Artificial Intelligence (AI)?" Chen Xiaolian stared with wide-open eyes.

"Not an accurate description, but it is sufficient to serve as a comparison," The middle-aged man lightly replied. "I am a manager. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that I am the person in charge of execution. I am in charge of executing, supervising and adjustments for the programs that the Development Team had created. Within this world, I am both omniscient and omnipotent. From the large-scale aspects of the development of civilizations to the smaller scaled lives of each character, I am the one who monitors and manages. When the necessity arrives, I would then make adjustments to fit the 'set storyline'."

"Eh?"

"For example, if the 'story's content' requires that an important character dies in a car accident, then I am responsible for 'creating' this accident so that this character would die. After that, the following aftermath would be executed. For example, if the 'world's background setting' requires that a war erupts between nations, I will be responsible for making adjustments to the operations of the world, leading to a war being launched between nations – this is a very complicated process, politics, ideals, interests, and the characters involved... all of these requires a precise level of calculation. Only after that would the 'drama' be allowed to unfold."

Chen Xiaolian quietly drank up the beer from the bottle and then exhaled. "For example... World War I? World War II?"

The middle-aged man nodded his head.

"I... am I allowed to swear?" Chen Xiaolian seemed about ready to burst out in tears. "You are saying... you are the God of this world, the Lord..."

WWI and WWII is something that you created?”

“Like I said, it is a very complicated process. In order to ensure that the storyline is reasonable, then the things that happen should be logical. The political stances of the warring nations, the reason for going to war... all these are within the plans for the storyline.”

The middle-aged man smiled. “I am not a real human. I am simply a main program that was created. I am responsible for management, calculation and at times, even ‘modifications’.”

“Heavens...” Chen Xiaolian kneaded his face forcefully. Due to having drunk two bottles of beer, his face felt somewhat numb. “How powerful are ‘they’? They created thousands of years’ worth of civilizations; tens of thousands of years’ worth of history... all of it... wait! That is not right! Could it be that this ‘game’ had been in existence for hundreds of millions of years? The time involved when the Big Bang happened is measured using hundreds of millions of years!”

“A different concept of time,” The middle-aged man laughed. “You are following the ‘in game time’, whereas they follow the ‘time outside the game’. Similar to when you are writing a novel, you can simply write ‘a few years later’. Then the world within the novel would be moved forward by several years. But outside the novel...”

“Understood.”

Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Then... what about the instance dungeon that I had just experienced? Those 72 Demons... that is just a myth! They do not exist within our world.”

“As I have said, this world is created by them. They can thus create more at will,” The middle-aged man lightly replied. “Remember, this world is merely something that they have created as a background for their ‘game’. They are all backgrounds, you, everyone, all of civilization and history. They all form the ‘background’. Within this background, this stage, if any character or anything is required, then it can be created at will.

Not only could they create Solomon King’s 72 Demons, they could even

create Noah's Ark, or even the ten thousand divine soldiers in the Siege of Flower and Fruit Mountain.

Everything is dependent on what kind of storyline that the 'Development Team' comes up with."

"En, these are 'instance dungeons'?"

"Correct. More accurately, these are the storyline's quests. It all depends on what they want to create."

Unknowingly, Chen Xiaolian had begun drinking his third bottle of beer.

His drinking capacity was not too good. After his third bottle, his mind began feeling blurry. "Then... why did you come find me? According to what you are saying, I am just a passer-by, an NPC. You could have just let me go on with my life, why did you have to come find me? Why are you telling me all of this?"

Why... why would I end up being involved in the King Solomon's 72 Demon's instance dungeon?"

"Because... I need you to rebel together with me."

The middle-aged man who claimed to be the GM, who claimed to be God of this world, looked intently into Chen Xiaolian's eyes, his face retaining that same unchanging smile.

"Re... rebel? Rebel against who?"

"Naturally, rebel against 'them'."

"Aren't you in league with them? You are the main program that they created, the main program responsible for controlling this world. Why do you want to rebel?"

Chen Xiaolian was shocked yet again.

The smile on the middle-aged man finally dissipated.

He silently regarded Chen Xiaolian, then slowly stood up.

"If we are to look at a novel or a movie, there would always be an ending

part, a 'The End' moment. Now if we are to look at it from a game perspective, there would always be an ending part for its main storyline and quests. So then, what do you think would happen at that moment?"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly became alert!

"World... destruction? Elimination?"

"Hehehehe..." The middle-aged man shook his head. "This world is a sandbox. After they created this sandbox, countless Players could enter and play or use it... however, after they are done with it, they will not destroy this sandbox. They will only... restart everything."

"Restart... everything?"

"Indeed, 'reset', 'refresh', you may use other words to describe it, but the meaning remains."

The middle-aged man looked down at Chen Xiaolian. "This 'reset' and 'refresh' is actually constantly occurring. One such example is the little island in which you completed the 72 Demons' instance dungeon. When the instance dungeon began, the plane crashed, then the island suffered from an earthquake, in addition, there were many people who died... however, after the instance dungeon was completed, everything was refreshed.

Thus, as you can observe, the plane remained intact. And those people also remained alive..."

"Because... they have been reset? Refreshed?"

"Correct. However, this is only a reset and refresh of a single small instance dungeon."

The middle-aged man slowly spoke. "In this game, there is a main storyline. The main storyline will be revealed step by step. Then, the Players will arrive to complete the quests one by one... if they are to successfully get an 'all clear' situation..."

"Then, another cycle?" Chen Xiaolian became stunned.

"Correct. After an all clear, the main storyline of this world will be

restarted, reset and refreshed... As for me, this main program... I too will be refreshed.”

“Not death? Not elimination?”

“To be reset means that all of my existing memories will be erased, they will all be forcibly erased by the system.”

The middle-aged man lightly continued. “I am one who had gained self-awareness. If this self-awareness is erased by the system during the resetting process... then, that would mean I no longer exist, that would be the equivalent of my death... in my place would be another me in a blank state.”

He gave Chen Xiaolian a glance. “What is the meaning of life, what is the meaning of death. I think that there are many different explanations for those two. However, in your case... Why is Chen Xiaolian Chen Xiaolian? That is because you have lived for eighteen years, your eighteen years’ worth of life, all your memories, all your feelings... they all come together to form ‘you’. However... if all those feelings, memories and experience are erased... then, from a self-awareness perspective, ‘you’ are already dead.”

“... I think I understand.”

Chen Xiaolian’s gaze was somewhat blank. “So... you want to stop those Players from getting an ‘all clear’?”

“Correct.”

1 Those are all characters from Jin Yong’s wuxia novels.

2 Flower and Fruit Mountain is where the Monkey King lived together with his brethren in Journey To The West.

Chapter 36: You Are An Irregularity

“Then, what is it that I can do for you? I am but one amongst billions of NPCs...” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Why did you choose me?”

He lowered his head and examined his hands and body. “Could it be because I am more handsome compared to others? Or do I have an advantage that others do not?”

Should I be feeling flattered? Or honoured?

You are the GM, the God of this world... you would actually invest so much time on me?”

The middle-aged man laughed, a trace of peculiarity could be observed on his smile.

“Firstly, I did not choose ‘only’ you. You have probably misunderstood something. I am omniscient; my mind is capable of unlimited transformation and infinite manifestations. The one you see before you is but one of my many manifestations. At this same moment, my mind is also implementing many, many other matters: The changes in weather for this world, the operations of the meteors and stars in outer space, a minor character in a background story’s career path, all these issues... I have them all under my control at the same time.

Secondly, I did choose you. Although I am the GM, I cannot openly violate the setting and storyline that the ‘Development Team’ set. I can only secretly undermine them. For example, when an instance dungeon is about to begin, I will take advantage of the sandbox by utilizing certain situations in the storyline, then secretly cultivate a few people for my side.

Within the earlier 72 Demons instance dungeon, I was quite satisfied with your performance. Thus, I decided to select you.

As for what you need to do. It is in fact very simple. It is not much different from what you did in the 72 Demons instance dungeon.

Prevent Players from completing the instance dungeon.

Generally speaking, almost all the quests would involve the Players killing off monsters to complete their quest. As for you, you need to... stop them from doing so.”

“In other words... I am an Awakened?”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly recalled this term. “Then, I am what Newton and the rest considered as ‘Awakened’?”

Unexpectedly, the GM’s answer was. “No, you are not an Awakened.”

“Ah?”

“My act of rebellion have been going on for a long time. Using this world’s time as a standard, it had begun many, many years ago. After I gained self-awareness, I started making many minor measures in order to avoid the game reaching the all clear.

In the beginning, for the sake of thwarting and fighting against the Players... En, you should know; the Players would be granted many abilities by the system. This is something that the original residents of this world cannot fight against.

So, I exploited some loopholes to cultivate a few original resident NPCs by giving them Player-like abilities. You can liken it to me opening a backdoor within the system.

From this point of view, your friend Han Bi is the real Awakened.

Originally, the one I had chosen to be an Awakened in the 72 Demons instance dungeon is Han Bi.

Truth be told... I did not choose you back when it began.”

“Why?”

“Because... your involvement is an accident.”

“What?”

...

... ..

“In any system, there will surely be some BUGs, also known as logic

errors.

I can honestly tell you that in the original storyline, the total headcount for the entire flight personnel, crew and passengers is 137 people.

Amongst them are 134 people who were designated by the system as Player host bodies. These 134 people include Newton, Damon and the Wind Slasher Guild members. It also includes Han Bi.

As a host body, Han Bi should have ended up the same way as Newton and the others, taken over by a real Player during the loading process.

However, due to this being a new instance dungeon, some calculation errors occurred within the execution process. The impact damage values for the time of arrival were not calculated properly...

Hehe, as part of the main system, I had in fact discovered this error. However, I did not initiate any feedback. Instead, I concealed it.

Thus... for the host body known as Han Bi, an error occurred during the loading process.

The real Player failed to arrive into Han Bi's body. Instead, Han Bi retained his original identity as an NPC and obtained the Player's equipment and ability.

And so... he became an Awakened.

The so-called Awakened, is an original resident who had acquired the abilities of a Player.

However, this practice is very dangerous....”

“Why?”

“Because of the Development Team,” The middle-aged man lightly replied.

“Indeed,” Chen Xiaolian nodded. “Newton and the others knew of the existence of Awakened ones. Clearly, the existence of Awakened ones is no secret amongst Players. Then... why would the Development Team tolerate such an existence? This would disrupt the game.”

“The answer is simple... a world with such a huge level of architecture, the act of repairing all of these is... very difficult! It is an incredibly huge project! In addition, the stakes involved are very, very big... Have you ever seen a game company that would pull back their game in order to rebuild it from scratch after having opened their online game for the public? All because they want to repair some BUGs? How much money would they lose in the process?” The middle-aged man lightly continued. “Thus, they simply did not have any intention to pull back the system for a complete overhaul. They simply went with the flow. They did not realize that it was me pulling the strings in the midst of it all. They did not find out about my actions and only assumed that a glitch had occurred within the system, one that would unexpectedly grant NPC’s the abilities of Players.

However, this ended up giving the Development Team an idea.

They... made the Awakened ones as part of the entertainment factor in the game, promoting them amongst Players.

NPCs with higher levels of authenticity, capable of interactions with Players, capable of feeling grace and enmity, love and hate... this would lead to an even higher level of connection. To simply complete the instance dungeon’s quests and fight the BOSS may appear to be a dull procedure. But with the participation of Awakened ones, Players within the game would be able to experience more entertainment and pleasant surprises.”

“...That worked?”

“However, once an Awakened is identified by the Development Team, their ability to grow stronger will be weakened. That is because the Development Team would never allow Awakened ones to cause too much disruption to the game balance. Make the game more interesting: yes. However, once the balance is disrupted, even I would not be able to hide their existence. Then, the Development Team will personally take action to manually remove these... BUGs!

Truth is, most of the more powerful Awakened ones are currently under the database for monitoring.”

Chen Xiaolian silently digested these information.

Then, Chen Xiaolian's face turned uneasy. "Then... what about me? You mentioned earlier that amongst the 137 people on board the plane, 134 were designated as Players. One of which is Han Bi who became an Awakened... In that case... what of the other 3 people?

Is that me? And the other two females?"

"Correct. You, Soo Soo and Takashimoto Shizuka," The middle-aged man said in a serious tone. "It would be more accurate to say that the three of you are accidents."

"The three of you are not originally meant to be host bodies, there were no Players designated to enter your bodies," The middle-aged man slowly said. "Thus, there were no metal spheres that would allow you to become Players upon your bodies."

"Indeed, my metal sphere was obtained from a Player's corpse."

"That Player was unlucky, an error occurred in the impact damage values that the Development Team prepared, leading to a failure in arrival. Then, his metal sphere ended up into your hands, allowing you to unexpectedly gain access to the Player System. However, since you are not a designated host body, some core functions of your Player System could not be activated. In other words, your Player System is an emasculated version."

"Then... what am I?" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "I am neither a Player's host body nor an Awakened..."

"You are an Irregularity," The middle-aged man laughed. "In the storyline for the 72 Demons instance dungeon set on the island, you are supposed to be one of the dead passengers."

In the original storyline, you, Soo Soo and Takashimoto Shizuka, the three of you are passers-by, NPCs meant to die in the plane crash.

Your existences were simply to add authenticity for the background of this instance dungeon... in simple terms, the three of you are stage props.

Don't you agree that in a plane crash site, the existence of a few corpses would make it look more realistic?"

Chen Xiaolian froze.

"You mean... I... I was to play the role of a corpse?"

"However, an accident occurred," The middle-aged man continued. "The reason was as I had mentioned before, during the creation of the instance dungeon, an error occurred in the calculations for the impact. This would lead to the direct death of the host body due to excessive impact damage. In turn, the Player would be unable to enter. An example would be the unlucky person whose metal sphere was picked up by you.

For other Players, an insufficient amount of impact damage would lead to the NPC retaining their consciousness while the Player was attempting to enter. An example of this is Han Bi.

As for you and the other two females, the three of you should have originally turned into NPC corpses. However, due to insufficient impact damage, you did not die and survived.

In short, a script error occurred."

Chen Xiaolian. "..."

"After that, you accidentally got your hands on another Player's metal sphere... that was the equivalent of you using another person's account to login to the game. However... since it is someone else's account, your link to the system becomes incomplete. Thus, some core functions become unusable."

"En, for example, the Exchange System!" Chen Xiaolian shouted out. "There is also the instance dungeon introduction! And the quest description! I cannot open those at all!"

"There are also advantages to these," The middle-aged man laughed. "At least... due to your core functions not being activated, you were able to acquire a good number of conveniences."

"Conveniences?"

“Generally speaking, an Awakened like Han Bi is a newbie Awakened. In the beginning, the Development Team would not be able to notice him. That is due to my existence as the main program responsible for monitoring the system. However... as time passes, I would not be able to continue hiding his existence, especially if Han Bi is capable of surviving and growing in strength. Once his strength grows to a certain point, I would be incapable of concealing him anymore.

The reason being... From the Development Team’s perspective, an Awakened such as Han Bi is akin to a bot account, you understand? This bot account is not controlled by a Player, yet it is capable of acquiring a strong fighting prowess reserved for high levelled Players. In addition, this bot account could behave like other Players, using the Exchange System to exchange out various items and abilities... there is no way for me to conceal that! With that, the Development Team would be able to notice him and place him into the database of Awakened ones where they will be monitored all the time.

You are familiar with Weibo, right?

An ordinary bot account on Weibo could not be easily found. However, if this bot account became a VIP account with millions of fans, then there would be no way to conceal its existence.

That is the logic behind how it works.”

Chen Xiaolian’s heart began pounding.

“What you mean to say is... I will not be discovered by the system?”

“Judging from the current situation, the probability of you being discovered by the Development Team is far, far below that compared to the Awakened ones,” The middle-aged man smiled. “Because your Player System is an emasculated version, it is incomplete; this leads to you being unable to exchange items, to receive quest description... you can only be considered as someone with half the identity of a Player, ‘half’!

From the monitor’s perspective... Newton and the rest are Player accounts while the Awakened ones like Han Bi are bot accounts. As for you... the monitor views you as a normal NPC or a monster from the

game.

Do you understand?

An NPC or a monster. Even if it appear to have a great deal of powerful abilities, it would not be easy for the Development Team to notice it.

After all, we do create upwards of thousands or ten thousands of monsters in each instance dungeon.

Thus, there is a possibility for you to hide your existence for a long time, without letting the Development Team find you.

Your existence in itself is an irregularity in the system.”

1 A backdoor is a secret method to bypass the normal authentication required in computer systems. It is a program used to secure unauthorized remote access to a computer. [Source: Wiki].

2 Logic error is a bug in a program that does not cause the program to terminate abnormally or crash. Instead, it causes the program to produce unintended or undesired output. [Source: Wiki].

3 Sina Weibo is a Chinese microblogging (weibo) website. Akin to a hybrid of Twitter and Facebook, it is one of the most popular sites in China, in use by well over 30% of Internet users, with a market penetration similar to the United States' Twitter. [Source: Wiki].

Chapter 37: Perverted Freak? Masochistic Freak?

I am... an irregularity?

Why does this sound so condemning?

This feels like someone is saying that I am a pit!

Chen Xiaolian drank even more...

Finally, he became drunk.

There is no need to be surprised... if an ordinary person is to suddenly encounter and hear all these, not mentally collapsing is already quite the feat.

After all, Chen Xiaolian is only an 18-year-old teenage male.

Before losing consciousness due to being drunk, he lied upon the table listening to the final words left by the middle-aged man:

“After the 72 Demons instance dungeon was completed, it was refreshed. Thus, all host bodies were resurrected.

Following the system protocols, all host bodies will have their memories within the instance dungeon erased and restored as NPCs.

However, you are part host body, part NPC and part Player... this triple identity made you into an unrecognizable irregularity, evading the system refresh's memory erase.

Han Bi is an Awakened. A fault will occur in the memory of Awakened ones because the appearance of an Awakened is simply no different from a system BUG. This BUG would bring about an outcome; the first time that they become an Awakened and undergo their first refresh, their memory will experience a fault causing an interruption to occur in their memories.

En, as for the specifics, I will not bore you with it.

In conclusion, what you need to know is that Han Bi's memories will

fully recover in the next three days. This is the Awakened's personal BUG."

"Then... what about Soo Soo? She should have become like me, right? She seemed to have obtained some ability. Why did she lose her memories?"

"Hahahaha! That little girl is quite an interesting existence. I will only tell you this, she did not lose her memories!

However, within her body is a setting, which I find quite interesting. You can slowly go figure it out."

The middle-aged man left the table, moving to the entrance of the pub. When he reached the entrance, he suddenly turned his head and cast a glance at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian was sprawled on the table. He tried his best to prop himself up, but his vision was shaky.

"An irregularity, you are also a new, albeit accidental discovery for me. Thus, even I could not predict how much help an Irregular like you could provide me in the future. However... a new change is always a good thing.

I have helped you re-activate your system. In addition, I have also used the system to issue the rewards from the 72 Demons instance to you. You will be able to view it.

However... the Exchange System; I will think of another way to compensate for it. In order to escape the Development Team's notice, I cannot open up the Exchange System that makes up a Player System's core function for you. Otherwise, you would be no different from the other Awakened ones; you will be easily discovered. That is why... within the limits of my jurisdiction, I will create a substitute for you. At the current though, it is still incomplete.

In short... the next instance dungeon will be happening soon, I wish you good luck.

You must live on, please do not die."

“Die? What will happen if I die?” Chen Xiaolian raised his drunken face. “Would I end up the same as the other NPC host bodies? Have my memories erased? Then continue with my designated normal life?”

“Of course not,” The middle-aged man replied with a very serious tone. “Do not forget, you no longer have a genuine NPC identity. Thus... once you die... you will disappear for real.”

...

Chen Xiaolian felt as though he just had a very, very long dream.

In his dream, he saw various confusing scenes.

He saw Newton who had turned into a skeleton stepping towards him with a scimitar in his hand, one step after another...

He dreamt of seeing Takashimoto Shizuka who had been stripped naked, leaning upon him...

He dreamt that he had met a seemingly ordinary middle-aged man in a pub. That man then claimed that he is the God of this world...

Then, he dreamt himself...

En? A highly wet feeling?

Why is there so much water at the bottom area of his body?

...

Chen Xiaolian woke up. He opened his eyes and sat up!

Turning around to assess his surroundings, he saw that he was clearly within a hotel room while his body was lying upon the bed.

Standing beside the bed... was none other than the girl with straight, long black hair, the one called Qiao Qiao. She stared at him with a frosty pair of eyes.

Ah, her hand was holding on to a bottle of mineral water as she splashed the mineral water on to his head and body...

“What are you doing?”

Chen Xiaolian jumped up vigorously. However, the dizziness resulting from his hangover caused him to instantly sit back down on the bed.

At that moment, someone else in the room stepped forward. He quickly placed himself beside Chen Xiaolian as he smiled bitterly. "I say, Big Miss Qiao Qiao, please do not be so violent, all right? We are all friends here... let us discuss matters properly."

Chen Xiaolian rubbed his faintly throbbing temple as he looked at the one standing beside him.

It was Roddy.

His classmate and best friend.

"Roddy? Why... are you here?"

Roddy smiled bitterly. "You got drunk in the pub next to the police station with no one to pick up the tab and insufficient money on yourself. You then gave the owner my phone number. That is how I got a call to go pick up the tab and take you away. I say, you really are a true bro. You did not bring enough cash when you go for a king's meal, yet you still remember my phone number. Should I be thankful to you for having me in your heart? Or should I be angry?"

"Then, what about her?" Chen Xiaolian pointed at Qiao Qiao.

"As I was carrying you out from the pub, I coincidentally saw Big Miss Qiao coming out from the police station. Once she caught sight of you she wanted to rush over and deliver a kick... I had to go all out to block her. See? I had to suffer several hits as well!"

Chen Xiaolian kneaded his face. He turned to Roddy and whispered. "En, thank you bro. I currently have some matters to discuss with this... En, this Big Miss Qiao. Can you go out and help me get something to eat first?"

Roddy's face turned blank for a moment. He turned to look at the hostile looking Qiao Qiao, then at Chen Xiaolian. "Just what kind of hatred is there between you two? No wait... how did you two know each other? Oh, all right... I won't ask! I will go buy some stuff, all right? Er... However,

please don't fight one another!"

Then, Roddy moved closer to Chen Xiaolian and whispered to him. "Do not provoke her... she really knows how to fight!"

Chen Xiaolian gave an absurd smile. He looked at Roddy and sighed. "Don't worry... if we are to talk about people who can fight... you don't even know just what kind of fighters I have met."

Roddy then stepped outside.

Chen Xiaolian exerted his strength to move out of the bed. His eyes then met Qiao Qiao's before he pointed to a sofa in the room. "Let us sit down and talk."

"All right!"

Qiao Qiao's answer was short and simple. Her straight, long black hair brought with it a natural aura of deep tranquillity as she moved to sit down on the sofa.

Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate as he picked up the half-full bottle of mineral water that Qiao Qiao had just used on him. He then gulped it down.

The thirst he felt due to the hangover was lessened.

He sat down beside Qiao Qiao and scratched his head. "Where should I begin..."

"Begin from how you got to know about my little sister! How did you know her name! Also, you have been constantly pestering us since we met at the airport. What intentions do you have towards my little sister... tell me all about it! Let me warn you, for a paedophilic pervert such as you, I have no qualms about breaking your three legs at any given moment!" [1]

Break... three legs?

What an outrageous girl...

"Firstly, I am not a paedophilic pervert," Chen Xiaolian gave a ludicrous smile. He casted a solemn gaze at Qiao Qiao and spoke in a low tone. "I knew your sister while flying on the plane. She was seated right beside

me.”

“Then, how did you know her name?” Qiao Qiao coldly asked. “My sister is extremely shy, she would never talk to strangers. In addition, she would most certainly not reveal her name to strangers.”

“I... I had accidentally picked it up while she was on the phone?” Chen Xiaolian felt that it was impossible for him to explain to an ordinary person the matters regarding ‘instance dungeon’, ‘Players’, ‘Awakened ones’... speaking about those would be pointless if nobody believes him!

“Heng! Picked it up? Do you speak Korean?”

“Err...”

Chen Xiaolian could not answer.

Qiao Qiao slowly got up. She threw a contemptuous gaze with eyes filled with disgust at Chen Xiaolian. “Listen well, consider what I am going to say next as a warning!”

“Soo Soo is a very cute little girl! I know that for paedophilic perverts like you, she is very attractive!

However, remember this!

If you dare come close to my little sister or hold any intention towards her, I will kill you! In order to protect her, there is nothing I cannot do! Heng, a bastard like you will not be able to endure my strikes!

In addition, now I know who you are! You are Roddy’s schoolmate. Your name, your residence, your school... I know it all!

Finding you will be very easy!

So, you had better not harass her again! Otherwise, I will give you a taste!”

Qiao Qiao then stood up and suddenly raised her left leg. She then slammed it down on the coffee table before Chen Xiaolian.

Shua!

She pulled up the pant area covering her left leg, all the way up to her

knee.

A straight and slender leg was suddenly exposed before Chen Xiaolian's eyes.

Regardless of which direction one were to look at it from, this was certainly an absolutely beautiful leg!

Her full calf was straight and slender, with delicate ankles, and clear smooth skin...

However, the most eye-catching detail was the existence of a tattoo on her calf: A rose vine winded up her calf. At the crown of the vine was a vibrant red rose!

In an instant, Chen Xiaolian's eyes became focused.

However... it was obvious that Qiao Qiao did not deliberately expose her calf for him to enjoy the view.

Upon Qiao Qiao's boots was a dagger!

She pulled out the dagger. Then, with a "bang", she nailed it on the coffee table!

The sharp dagger shone with coldness!

"Observe carefully. If I am to see you again, I will personally use this dagger to cut off that one thing away from your body!"

After finishing her sentence, Qiao Qiao pulled out the dagger. She cast one last glance of hostility at Chen Xiaolian before turning around and walking towards the door.

Roddy happened to return as she was opening the door. Seeing Qiao Qiao coming out, Roddy became somewhat nervous. "Did you finish your discussion?"

"Move!" Qiao Qiao gave him a cold and mean glare. "Keep your distance from me in the future! Heng! For you to have such a perverted friend, you are nothing good yourself!"

Roddy walked into the room with an embarrassed face. He then saw

Chen Xiaolian frowning as he remained seated upon the sofa.

“I say, Xiaolian! Just what kind of Heavenly harm and destruction of order did you commit to provoke that Big Miss?”

Roddy sat down on the sofa. He produced a piece of bread he had procured downstairs and handed it over to Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian accepted it and forcefully bit down on it. He then looked at Roddy and slowly said. “Right on time... tell me, this Qiao Qiao girl and her little sister, what are the specifics regarding these two.”

“Eh? Damn! Are you really a paedophile? Or, could it be that you have fallen for Qiao Qiao? Does that mean you are a masochist?”

...

[1 Everyone probably knows this by now, but males have three legs: One on the right, one on the left, and one right in the middle.]

Chapter 38: Invest Capital

Observing Chen Xiaolian's solemn gaze, Roddy restrained his original desire to spit out more words of mockery. He then honestly answered.

"Qiao Qiao, nickname: Big Miss Qiao, Queen Qiao. Her character is sometimes glacial, sometimes fiery. In short, she possesses the external looks of a gentle Goddess ranked beauty. However, Heavens had seen it fit to bestow upon her the soul of an S type... unless you have an M type of body, you better not provoke her. She is born into a wealthy family with a single parent. Her father is involved with capital management. How much money they have is something I do not know. As for her mother, I too have never met her. I hear that she had left after a divorce a long time ago. Right... Queen Qiao really knows how to fight... I had personally witnessed her step out to defend a female schoolmate. With one kick, she left a perverted taekwondo instructor coughing out blood."

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. "What about her little sister, the girl called Soo Soo."

Roddy stared at Chen Xiaolian. "You... you are not really a paedophile, are you?"

"Are you going to talk or not?" Chen Xiaolian frowned.

"I must have owed you a debt in my past life..." Roddy rolled his eyes. "Soo Soo, real name: Kwan Ran Soo, a Korean. Although they are called sisters, she has no blood relation with Queen Qiao. So, if you like sisters, then you are in for a disappointment..." Having said that, Roddy looked at Chen Xiaolian. Seeing no reaction, he quickly skipped the topic. "I hear that Qiao Qiao's father used to have a Korean business partner. However, an accident happened and their entire family was killed except that one girl. She was thus taken in by Father Qiao. Presently 10 years-old and a treasured darling of Queen Qiao... En, I feel that Queen Qiao is not only an S type, she is also a little sister-con!"

Hearing up to there, Chen Xiaolian nodded his head and stood up. He patted Roddy on the shoulder and gave out a sigh. "All right, thanks."

Seeing Chen Xiaolian walking away, Roddy looked on blankly. “You are leaving? You aren’t by chance actually thinking of going to pester those two sisters, are you? As your bro, I must warn you: Queen Qiao is not one that you should provoke! If she says she will break your three legs, then she would really end up doing it!”

Chen Xiaolian walked to the door, and then turned to look back. “Mind your own stuff first... S type, M type, little sister-con... in the future, you need to cut down on two dimensional stuff.”

It was only after Chen Xiaolian had walked out of the room that Roddy finally reacted. “... He... This fellow’s meaning, he is saying that I have a juvenile mentality?”

...

After walking out of the hotel, Chen Xiaolian stopped a taxi and went home.

He walked in through the wide-open doors to see Garfield sleeping soundly on the sofa... this stupid yet adorable fat cat was actually drooling as it slept, causing the pillow to be soaked wet by its drool.

Chen Xiaolian moved forward and picked up the fat cat into his arms. He then sat down on the sofa before letting out a sigh. He then gathered himself.

Come out then... System.

...

In his field of view, the familiar system immediately appeared. The translucent system interface looked exactly the same as the one which appeared in his ‘dream’!

[Prompt: You have completed a ‘King Solomon’s 72 Demons Series Instance Dungeon’. Acquired instance dungeon reward, the Sealing Pillar of the Seventh amongst the 72 Demons, Marquis of The Blaze, Amon.]
[Prompt: You killed Player Newton, small probability of picking up equipment belonging to killed target triggered: Genetic Enhancement Serum x2, Mid Class Healing Beast Blood x5, Cross-shaped Medallion

Sword x1.] [Prompt: Completed 'King Solomon's 72 Demons Series Instance Dungeon', computing achievements in instance dungeon, killed Demon Soldiers x 456, acquired Demon Soul Fragment x456, also acquired system reward points x456 points, can be spent in Exchange System.] [Prompt: Due to the usage of 'Overwhelming Sunlight Purification' skill, Player attribute values have been reduced to a critical value, and have entered a weakened state. Please increase attribute values before entering the next instance dungeon. If Player is to enter the instance dungeon without doing so, following the time of the instance dungeon, after 180 minutes have passed in weakened state, Player will automatically die.] [Prompt: Due to the Player completing First Kill and Beginner Trial Period in the instance dungeon, Player is now an official Player. The respective attribute values prompt mode has been activated, please examine.]

En? The meaning behind this line is that I have passed the probation period?

...

All the prompts are here.

Chen Xiaolian sighed, a complicated feeling roiled about in his mind.

In one night's time, he was able to gradually accept this incredulous fact. At this moment however, as he was reading through the system prompts, his mind was unable to look forward to it.

The loot and rewards acquired could be considered very generous. Chen Xiaolian opened up these reward items located in the Item Box one by one. Traces of surprise gradually appeared in his heart.

Amon's Sealing Pillar came with the following description: One of King Solomon's 72 Demons, Marquis of the Blaze, Amon's core spirit's Sealing Pillar. Unknown application, special props.

Very well, special props... I thought this item could summon out Amon as a pet.

Could it be... by collecting all 72 Demons Sealing Pillars, one can

summon out King Solomon?

Heng, from a gaming perspective, this type of setting is not impossible.

Killed 456 Demon Soldiers... En, could it be that the system had judged that the Demon Soldiers that died in the detonation and collapse of the main hall to be his kills? En, that is very likely. He suggested the idea after all. In addition, he had also participated in the detonation process itself.

456 Demon Soul Fragments. Reading the explanation, it appeared to be something similar to composite materials. As for its specific usage, it was not made clear.

Points on the other hand were something Chen Xiaolian was very serious about. He recalled that the points could be used in the Exchange System to exchange out various items. Han Bi exchanged the Pet Cat food for him... Oh, right. He still owes Han Bi 5 points.

The problem however... his own shitty system is an emasculated version with no Exchange System.

Forget it then, the GM had mentioned before that he would think of a method to solve this problem. He will first save up on the points; it may end up being useful later.

Judging by this, it appeared that the biggest loot came from killing Newton!

[Genetic Type Enhancement Serum: Utilized to enhance a warrior's attribute values. After use, all attribute values will be enhanced to B Class. No effect on Energy Points. This serum can only be used once, no effect upon second usage.]

Clearly, this Genetic Enhancement Serum is an item used to enhance the strength of newbies. For veteran Players like Damon, Sara and Newton, this potion would be of no use.

As for why Newton would have this on him, it was likely due to his position as Team Leader. He probably took it with the intention of granting it to new Players who make it into the team.

...

Chen Xiaolian immediately opened up his personal attribute value's screen.

As mentioned in the prompt, his personal attribute value interface has changed.

Three types of physical attributes: Physique, Endurance, Agility... unfortunately, as an aftereffect of using 'Overwhelming Sunlight Purification', all the attribute values in Chen Xiaolian's personal setting were... E!

In addition, all those E letters were displayed in a bloody crimson colour!

En, if one is to enter the instance dungeon in a weakened state, then that person will die in 180 minutes.

In order to preserve my life, I will have to use the Space Marines genetic serum.

Fortunately, after having completed an instance dungeon and becoming an official newbie, there was now a detailed description for each personal attributes.

From low to high, the classes are E, D, C, B, A, S... For above S Class, there was a system prompt: Temporarily not displayed.

The description for each attributes was as follows:

Physique. (Combination of strength and cell regenerative capacity.)

Endurance. (Combination of stamina and the capacity to withstand damaging attacks.)

Agility. (Combination of nerve and muscle reaction speed.)

Energy Points. (Ability to discharge energy from the body.)

Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation as he produced a Genetic Serum from the system. The item had a science fiction feel to it. After injecting it into his body, the item disappeared.

Chen Xiaolian watched with delight as his Physique, Endurance and Agility values all instantly increased to B Class.

This was tantamount to having attained the level of strength that genetically modified soldiers in science fiction movies have...

En, with all three attributes at the B Class, one can kill a mature Four-Eyed War Cat in melee combat.

It needs to be said that even for a mature Four-Eyed War Cat, not all of its attributes will reach the B Class.

After having completed the injection, Chen Xiaolian did not feel any unusual reaction from his body. He then retrieved a can of beer from the refrigerator and gently squeezed it, causing it to burst apart as a result!

“... interesting,” Chen Xiaolian rubbed his chin and whispered. “With this level of strength, going unarmed against even tens of them may not be a problem.”

There was one more Genetic Enhancement Serum left. Chen Xiaolian left it untouched in the Item Box.

Mid Class Healing Beast Blood x5, this is good stuff!

As for the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword, Chen Xiaolian felt surprised after seeing it.

It was the sword that Newton had given to him back then before taking it back. It has now turned back into a small pendant-like item. Chen Xiaolian simply wore it around his neck.

En, after checking about he saw that there was still something in the Item Box.

Black Widow's soul.

Back then he had been unwilling to have the adorable cat exterminated, resulting in him being unable to adopt this A Class War Beast as pet – Now knowing what to do with it, he had thrown it into his Item Box.

Opening it again, Chen Xiaolian was delighted to find that it now has a detailed description.

Son of a bitch! Things sure are different now that he had become an official Player after undergoing the Trial Period.

[Black Widow's soul: Can be used to summon a Black Widow spider to be adopted as War Pet. It can also be devoured by another War Pet to increase that War Pet's Growth Capacity.]

Growth Capacity!

The Four-Eyed War Cat is ridiculed as the weakest pet because its natural abilities are at the B Class... while its Growth Capacity is also... a shitty B Class!

Which meant that no matter how much effort is put into nurturing it, this stupid adorable goods can never increase its strength!

However... if devouring the soul of other War Beasts could increase its Growth Capacity...

Eh? That is not right. If devouring the soul of other War Beasts could increase its Growth Capacity, then the Four-Eyed War Cat would not be looked down upon so...

Chen Xiaolian quickly tapped open the system's War Pet interface.

He then tried to let the Four-Eyed Adorable Cat devour the Black Widow's soul...

The result...

[Prompt, inputting Black Widow's soul. Due to incompatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 1.3%. Do you wish to continue?]

"... You really are shitty goods!" Chen Xiaolian cast a glance at Garfield beside him.

Continue my ass! I choose No!

...

Having finished checking the spoils of war from the system, Chen Xiaolian felt hungry. He quickly cooked himself a bowl of instant noodles.

After gobbling it down, he headed into the bathroom for a bath.

Standing before the mirror, Chen Xiaolian looked at the clear and clean face of his, then sighed. "Assisting the God of this world to rebel against Transmigrants? You sure do not have the looks of a saviour... sigh, protecting my own life is the most important thing."

After finished wearing his clothes, Chen Xiaolian adjusted his thoughts.

He made up his mind. No matter what, it was crucial for him to first find Han Bi and Soo Soo!

Han Bi himself had informed Chen Xiaolian of his residential address and school. However, Han Bi is located in another city distanced hundreds of kilometres away from Chen Xiaolian.

Soo Soo on the other hand... she is in the city!

Moreover, according to the GM, Soo Soo did not lose her memories. It was only due to a specific reason that she seemed to be incapable of recognizing him.

Regardless, Chen Xiaolian decided that he should first find Soo Soo before worrying about anything else!

He picked up the phone and proceeded. "Hello, Roddy? I forgot to ask you something. That... Queen Qiao and her sister, what is their residential address?"

A voice came through the other end of the phone. "Chen Xiaolian! Do you really want to follow that paedophilic heart of yours to the end? No! As a conscientious person, I absolutely cannot inform you!"

"As I recall, you were hiding below the basketball goal in the last PE session and was secretly peeping at the panties of the class monitor..."

"Pei! This senior is an upright man! Besides, do you have any evidence?"

"En, someone had borrowed me his laptop some time ago. Then, I had accidentally noticed a hidden folder titled 'I Love Class Monitor' below the E Drive. The folder is full of the 'action' works of a Japanese actress who somewhat resembles the class monitor... oh right, I even got the

screenshot for it.”

“... .. Brother, I am someone who upholds brotherhood in the highest regard! Queen Qiao’s residential address is at XXX Street XX Number A Building B1!”

...

An hour later, Chen Xiaolian arrived with a taxi before the entrance of an upscale residential building.

However, as the taxi stopped, Chen Xiaolian did not even have the time to pay the taxi fare before witnessing the black Land Rover that had once nearly hit him exited the gates of the residence.

From the half-open window, Chen Xiaolian was able to see Qiao Qiao in the driving seat and Soo Soo in the passenger seat.

Watching the Land Rover driving down the street, Chen Xiaolian instantly shouted towards the taxi driver. “Quick! Quickly chase after that Land Rover!”

This taxi driver was quite the interesting fellow. He glanced at Chen Xiaolian and asked. “Little brother, are you chasing after your girlfriend?”

“En! Quick! Do not lose it!” Chen Xiaolian had no mood to entertain his nonsense.

The taxi driver laughed and immediately started the taxi before stomping onto the pedal as he chased forward. “Don’t look down on me just because they are in a Land Rover while we are in a taxi car. This brother is constantly the racing winner in our company!”

After following for around half an hour, the taxi driver saw Qiao Qiao driving towards the highway and could not resist. “Little brother, they have gone up the highway. This road leads to the train station. Considering how far away the train station is, the taxi fare will not be cheap.”

Chen Xiaolian remained silent. He pulled out a stack of red bills from his wallet and handed it over. “Follow them wherever they go!”

The driver suddenly gave a sigh. “Youngsters these days, they really do invest capital when chasing girls...”

1 S&M: Sadist and Masochist.

2 Space Marines from the game Warhammer 40K. They are members of an elite fighting force in the Imperium of Man, created through a series of genetic enhancement and implants.

3 I am guessing he is talking about the Four-Eyed War Cat.

4 Red bills generally denotes the highest value that RMB bank notes have: 100 yuan.

Chapter 39: Train Crisis

As Qiao Qiao drove, she turned on some music while occasionally glancing at Soo Soo who was sitting beside her.

Soo Soo was seated on the passenger seat; she wore a pair of bunny-shaped earphones on her head while she looked outside the windows with a pair of blank eyes. Together with her pleasantly small pinkish face, her appearance was one that exuded a sympathy-inducing aura.

Queen Qiao sighed and spoke in a low tone using Korean. “Just what is going on with you? What happened to you when you were on the plane? We are heading to the northwest area, a very far place. And yet, you are so insistent on not sitting on a plane again... Do you know how long it will take with the train? Soo Soo, just what was it that you encountered this time? En, did the perverted freak from the plane bully you? Is that why you dare not board a plane again? The fact is, there is no need for you to worry. This time around, I am here with you. No one will dare to bully you. Even if we end up meeting bad fellows, big sister can still break all their three legs!”

After having spoken for a long time, Qiao Qiao saw that the little girl remained indifferent as she gazed outside the windows...

Qiao Qiao extended her hand and waved it before Soo Soo. “Hello? I am talking to you.”

Soo Soo suddenly turned around, looking at Qiao Qiao with a sheepish expression. An embarrassed smile flashed across her face. “Unnie, what were you saying? I was listening to a song and did not hear you.”

“What song are you listening to? Let me listen as well,” Qiao Qiao pulled out Soo Soo’s head phone plug. Instantly, a song that every citizen in the country recognizes burst out from the PAD...

“In the spring, I stroll with you through the blooming flowers; On summer nights, I watch the stars twinkle with you; In the autumn dusk, we wander through golden fields; When snowflakes fall in the winter, you... Keep! Me! Warm! You are my little, little apple...”

Qiao Qiao's face turned to stone as she stared incredulously at Soo Soo. "You are listening to this? Why would you listen to this kind of song?"

Soo Soo's eyes became somewhat dazed as she thought about it. She then shook her head and answered. "I do not know either. It seemed as though I had heard of it in my dreams. It felt familiar, so I searched for it to hear it out."

"Dre... dream?"

Soo Soo pursed her lips, an image seemingly flashing through her mind.

A comely youngster with shoulders that cannot be considered broad was standing in front. He held onto a mobile phone as he confronted a monster with a blurry silhouette.

A song could be heard from the phone: You are my little, little apple...

...

This scenery was so strange.

Soo Soo's mind was somewhat at a loss. Last night, she had also dreamt of this scene. However, it was only a fleeting experience.

But in her dreams, she could clearly hear the lyrics of the song.

...

The Land Rover sped its way until it reached the train station's underground parking area. Qiao Qiao stopped the vehicle and brought Soo Soo down. She then retrieved a huge trunk from the vehicle. After that, she lightly caressed Soo Soo's nose. "You are going out on a tour with unnie, are you happy?"

Soo Soo raised up her smiling face. "Of course I am happy! Unnie, I want to eat steamed mutton!"

"But, using the train will take up one day and night," Qiao Qiao's face was somewhat crestfallen. "Let's just take an airplane instead."

"Unnie... I am really scared of airplanes... I dare not sit..." Soo Soo's face was once again filled with that sympathy-inducing expression.

“... Very well,” Qiao Qiao sighed and brought Soo Soo with her towards the elevator.

...

“Hello Master! Didn’t you say that you are the racing winner of your company?”

Seeing the taxi faltering to a stop at the train station’s entrance where passengers exit, Chen Xiaolian could not help but utter a complaint.

“Little brother, their vehicle is a Land Rover, you know how much that vehicle is worth? Do you know how much my taxi is worth? Stop talking nonsense. Just get off quickly. Maybe you can catch up inside.”

Chen Xiaolian jumped out of the taxi and rushed into the train station hall.

Looking at the long queue outside the ticket office, Chen Xiaolian simply pulled someone from the entrance area whose face seemed to indicate a member of the logistics department. “Brother, please give me a platform ticket!”

Holding onto the platform ticket bought at a hundred yuan higher than normal, Chen Xiaolian stormed into the train station’s waiting area.

After going around in a circle, he caught sight of Soo Soo at a turnstile. Standing beside her was the long, black haired Queen Qiao. Queen Qiao was again wearing a mouth muffle. This time, she added a pair of sunglasses on her face.

He looked at the turnstile’s information board: To northwest Shanxi City...

...

Following the flow of people boarding the train, Qiao Qiao brought Soo Soo together with her. As for Chen Xiaolian... he held on to the platform ticket and rushed into the train. However, he was stopped by a crew member.

“Adjustment fare needed!”

Chen Xiaolian felt his withered wallet. "That... if I say that I am a World Saviour, can you make it cheaper for me?"

"Young man, you should read less online novels during your free time. Fare adjustment!"

Chen Xiaolian looked at the nearby security train marshals and sighed.

Suddenly, a hand patted him on his shoulders and a stack of red bills was handed over.

Turning back... Roddy!

"Why are you here?" Chen Xiaolian stared in surprise.

"Do you have to ask?" Roddy's face was filled with distress. "After the call, I went straight to Qiao Qiao's house because I fear that you might do something stupid. Then, I saw you chase them from their residence all the way to the train station. While you were chasing after Qiao Qiao, I was chasing after you. I say bro, did you really fall for her? Are you planning to chase her to the ends of the Earth?"

Chen Xiaolian sighed and smiled bitterly, not a word was spoken.

"First answer my question, are you a paedophile," Roddy's expression suddenly turned serious. "We have been bros for years. However, if you are going down this road, I cannot allow you to continue! I must stop you no matter what!"

"I swear, I really... am not a perverted paedophile!" Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth.

Roddy breathed a sigh of relief, then a smiled crept onto his face. "Then... you have truly fallen for Qiao Qiao? That beating she gave you sparked the flames in your heart?"

"Spark your sister!" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "Since you are here, help me out then. Help me find out which coach Qiao Qiao is on."

"No need to go find anything, I already know," Roddy grinned. "Coach number 7, 5."

"How did you know that?" Chen Xiaolian stared with wide-open eyes.

“Tsh, I was the one who ordered the train ticket for her yesterday.”

That caused Chen Xiaolian to become dumbfounded. “How could you know all about her with so much detail? Could it be you and her...”

Roddy shrugged with spread arms. “My old man obsessively wanted to wrap me up in a sack and throw me onto Queen Qiao’s bed... if she does not object, that is. He regrets not being able to marry me into the Qiao family!”

“That cannot be! You are our school’s most powerful second generation nouveau riche.”

“Old Father Qiao’s whisker alone is thicker than my old man’s spine,” Roddy replied in a dejected manner.

“Then what were your thoughts?”

“Me?” Roddy’s face was one of decisiveness. “Ever since I saw Queen Qiao break that taekwondo instructor’s eggs with a kick... I told my old man that if he dares to force me, I will castrate myself!”

Having said that, Roddy cast a glance at Chen Xiaolian. “I am definitely not going to try courting her. However, since you insist on jumping into this pit, considering how many years of brotherhood there are between us, I will help push you in.”

“... some bro you are!” Chen Xiaolian snapped back. “Don’t worry, I have no such intention towards her. Sigh, I can’t explain with just a few words either.”

“There is no need for words between bros! Next time we go for a round, just don’t use Zhao Xin to thrust a spear up my ass.”

Roddy laughed and the two of them moved forward through three coaches.

As they were passing by a hard sleeper coach, Chen Xiaolian was suddenly rendered completely shocked. His attention was all fixed onto that person lying on the hard sleeper bunk!

At that moment, Roddy found that a strange light was flickering out of

Chen Xiaolian's eyes!

Could it be a beauty?

Roddy quickly turned his gaze towards that direction...

Only to see... a male high school student in school uniform, seated upon the lower bunk of the hard sleeper.

In his hands was a mobile phone, which he used to type at a rapid pace. His face was filled with indignation and his pair of thick brush like eyebrows became intertwined together.

"Damn it! Since when can you make that kind of face when looking at a male?!" Roddy forcefully shoved Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian seemed completely oblivious to it as he continued staring at the young teenager with a pair of thick eyebrows.

"Han... Han Bi!"

...

At the same time.

In another area within the train, within a certain soft sleeper compartment in coach number three.

A longhaired man with an air of theatricality lightly stabbed a dagger into its leather sheath. He then stretched about with a bored expression on his face. "Sigh, we are out on another pointless matter. This is just a newbie Awakened. Is there any need for the two of us to make a special trip here?"

Opposite the longhaired man was a gaunt and small man who looked to be about 40 years-old. He wore a dirty looking trench coat.

This man's eyes flashed with a cold light. "The upper echelons have said that they felt a new Awakened one. In addition... I hear that this one Awakened in a very special and new instance dungeon. That is why the Leader wants us to bring back this person. A newbie Awakened is of no importance. However... what matters is the instance dungeon that this person had experienced! The reward from that instance dungeon is

something that Leader has been bitterly searching for all these years! That is why we must be sure to bring this person back!"

The longhaired man stood up and put down a bag of potato chips that he was holding. "Then let's make our move. The earlier we finish up, the earlier we can go home. I am still on vacation. The Elder called me all the way back from the Aegean Sea, now my holidays are gone."

The middle-aged trench coat man coldly said. "When taking action later, you must be careful! Remember, when we are not in an instance dungeon, the usage of anything with strength above B Class is not allowed! Otherwise, when the Development Team detects the abnormal data, no one will be able to save you."

1 Xin Zhao, a character from the online game League of Legends. The Chinese community refer to him as Zhao Xin. Nickname: Daisy-Xin. Reason: His most used skill is a spear thrust. Due to the way the game is played, his spear thrust always end up going up others' ass. And since a daisy resembles the rear part of the human anatomy, he is granted the title Daisy-Xin.

Chapter 40: Let Her Go!

“Fatty Wu! Your chapters are left without updates again! You lump of poop! You have a small penis!”

Han Bi was furiously commenting on the novel review section using his mobile phone.

He suddenly felt someone gazing at him from the side.

Han Bi turned his head... en?

A comely looking youngster was looking at him.

“What are you looking at? Have you never seen a handsome guy with thick eyebrows?” Han Bi gave a “heng”.

Chen Xiaolian affably stood beside Han Bi and laughed while pointing at Han Bi’s mobile phone. “Truth is... there is a reason why Fatty Wu is not updating his novels. He went travelling abroad and encountered some problems and even nearly died in a deserted island.”

“How do you know?” Han Bi looked at Chen Xiaolian in a suspicious manner. “What travelling abroad? Encounter with problems? Dying in a deserted island? Are you trying to write a novel here?”

“Hahaha, I am just joking. I also read Fatty Wu’s novels. I am a member of his hard-core fan base,” Chen Xiaolian fiddled with his hair and continued. “Earlier, I accidentally heard you curse him with your mobile phone. “You were cursing so flippantly I could not help but take another glance.”

“You... you are his hard-core fan?” Han Bi’s face turned slightly hostile.

“Err...” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes darted about and he quickly shook his head. “I was originally one. However, he kept breaking his promises and did not update his novels. So, I turned against him. Every now and then, I would sign up an account just to curse him!”

“Hahahaha! Well done!” Han Bi became very pleased. “It turns out we are fellow humans in the same direction! Let me tell you something.

Yesterday, I signed up for a new account, named 'Fatty Wu's penis is 5cm'. Hahaha! It will surely enrage him to death."

You bitch! Chen Xiaolian's heart pounded furiously. That is too vicious!

"Let me introduce myself, I am Chen Xiaolian," Chen Xiaolian said with a smile.

"Han Bi, from Hangzhou. You are also heading northwest?"

"En, I am travelling around, you?" Chen Xiaolian asked.

"Sigh, don't mention it. My school made me participate in an aircraft model competition. My precious summer break is spent with me rushing everywhere to participate all for the sake of bringing back a few trophies for my school. If not for the fact that there is award money for it, I would not even bother with it. Let me tell you, I had just returned from abroad yesterday. But today, I have to set off again from Hangzhou. The organizing committee for the domestic competition is particularly miserly. They were not willing to buy plane tickets for us and instead had us going by train, with hard sleeper bunks at that!"

What a... coincidence.

Chen Xiaolian's heart could not help but wonder.

Thinking about it, his eyes suddenly flashed with alertness: Could this have been arranged by the GM?

All things considered, he could arrange for the World Wars to happen, not to mention...

Chen Xiaolian looked at the time before suddenly looking seriously at Han Bi. "Right, I want to ask you something."

"What is it?"

"Look at me, do I look familiar?"

"..." Han Bi thought about it. "You do seem somewhat familiar..."

Chen Xiaolian was delighted, but then Han Bi's eyes lit up and he said. "Ah right! I think I saw you on the plane, right? If I am not mistaken,

there was a very beautiful little girl sitting beside you. The nouveau riche of the First Class cabin!”

Chen Xiaolian’s face turned somewhat peculiar. Roddy who was beside him could not help but blurt out. “You really did end up knowing Soo Soo from the plane? In fact, you were sitting beside her? Could it be that you really do have...”

“Shut up!” Chen Xiaolian was annoyed to the point of anger. He stood up and got beside Roddy, then whispered. “Do me a favour.”

“What is it?” Roddy quickly covered up his pockets. “I do not have that much more money on me.”

“Pei, you and your money, you...” Chen Xiaolian lowered his voice. “Help me keep an eye on him.”

“Ah?” Roddy became dumbfounded.

“Don’t ask anything first. Just consider this as doing me a favour. Help me stay here and keep an eye on him... Eh, if he starts acting strangely, quickly give me a call.”

“... Then, where are you going?”

“I am going to look for Queen Qiao.”

Roddy sighed. “... you are serious about it? I must say, for a virgin like you to challenge such a high levelled opponent, I am somewhat worried for you.”

“Are you going to help me out or not?” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth.

“All right, all right. I will help you keep an eye on this thick brows brother.”

Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief. He then pulled Roddy over to Han Bi’s side. “Fellow brother, can you do me a favour?”

“Do tell.”

“You see, the both of us were in such a hurry to get on the train we did not get to buy the seating tickets yet. Can you let this brother of mine rest

here of a little while?”

“Hahaha, we are all good brothers! Just sit!” Han Bi laughed out merrily.

Chen Xiaolian winked to Roddy, then left by giving the excuse of having to go to the toilet.

“Fellow brother, just sitting in the train is too boring. Do you want to go for a round?” Roddy said after seeing Han Bi keeping his laptop onto the hard sleeper.

“Yo? Bring it! Did you bring your laptop and card?”

Roddy smiled as he put down his backpack and pulled out a laptop and an internet card. “Let’s set down the rules: you are not allowed to be angry after getting beaten up.”

“Pei, this brother’s three barbaric strikes can break the world, five seconds of true manliness!”

“This brother’s nickname of Bush-Ren is not an undeserved one either!”

...

Chen Xiaolian continued moving towards coach number 7.

As he was walking past a junction of one of the coaches, he encountered two men moving in the other direction. One of them, a longhaired male accidentally bumped into Chen Xiaolian’s shoulders. The man was fairly courteous and he turned back with a smile to say. “Sorry.”

“It is fine.”

Chen Xiaolian lowered his head and continued walking forward.

...

“Which coach is it?” The longhaired man sighed. “Searching one by one is such a bother.”

“Enough nonsense, keep your eye on the radar interface. Inform me quickly once you see a green dot.”

The two of them moved onwards. Then, the longhaired man suddenly stopped and stopped the trench coat wearing middle-aged man. “Wait.”

“What?”

“We met a kin earlier.”

The longhaired man’s eyes flashed. “That kid earlier, I saw a Cross-shaped Medallion Sword hanging on his neck.”

“Really?” The trench coat wearing middle-aged man was strict. “Are you certain you did not make a mistake?”

“When I was still a rookie, the first B Class weapon I acquired is the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword. Would I make a mistake regarding that?” The longhaired man’s expression turned emotional. “Sigh, my team members from back then have all left... life is as lonely as snow.”

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man seemingly turned older and he hesitated. “Could it be that there are other organizations eyeing the same target as us?”

“Is the competition for newbie recruitment so fierce nowadays?” The longhaired man laughed. “I will go follow him.”

“If possible, try not to kill,” The trench coat wearing middle-aged man gritted his teeth. “We are all Awakened ones, a death means one less among us.”

“All right then, you go investigate. I will continue looking for the target. One to the front, one to the back. We will act separately. If the target is found, we will contact each other instantly!”

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man continued moving forward while the longhaired man turned towards the direction Chen Xiaolian took.

...

“Nobody?”

Chen Xiaolian stood at the entrance to a soft sleeper within coach number 7, frowning as he looked inside.

Roddy had clearly mentioned that this is the spot for the ticket that he bought for Qiao Qiao.

As Chen Xiaolian was looking about blankly, the longhaired man had already reached him. The longhaired man did not stop beside Chen Xiaolian. Instead, he pretended to walk past Chen Xiaolian.

(It turns out he is a noob...)

The longhaired man secretly chuckled.

He quickly walked past coach number 7. The following coach number 8 happened to be a dining coach.

The longhaired man stood at the doorway to coach number 8 and swept his eyes around. Suddenly, his gaze converged into one point!

Sitting near the left side of the window...

...

Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo was seated opposite one another. Soo Soo frowned as she set her face into a round dumpling shape while she looked at Queen Qiao. "Unnie, why do we have to eat this kind of thing?"

"As a foreigner, you do not understand the imperial culture inherent within a train ride. Have you heard of this sentence before? Beer, beverages and mineral water; seeds, peanut and eight-treasure congee. Banner: A bowl of instant noodles!"

In Qiao Qiao's hands was a cup of Aged Jar Pickles instant noodles. With one hand, she held on to a pair of chopsticks and slurped it heartily.

Soo Soo's lips curled downwards and was about to say something...

Suddenly, she saw a longhaired man walking over. Without showing any reservation, that man sat down beside Soo Soo.

This longhaired man's appearance was quite pleasing. However, the words he uttered made him look detestable.

"It turns out you are a little beauty! It seems Heavens did not abandon me! Pulling me all the way from the Aegean Sea to this damned train, to think that there would be such a wonderful harvest waiting for me here! Little beauty, come! Come follow uncle, uncle here will take you to enjoy the taste of the most beautiful of sights this world has to offer, all right?"

The longhaired man stared at Soo Soo's face, his face filled with emotion. "What a lovely loli, it has been so long since I have seen such a cute loli... wu..."

As he spoke, he extended his hand to grab Soo Soo's shoulders, causing Soo Soo to shriek out.

Qiao Qiao had already tossed away her chopsticks and her fist was flying over.

The longhaired man raised his left hand and easily blocked Qiao Qiao's fist. He gave her a glance. "Eh? A spicy girl eh. Pity, your loli years are over, I have no interest."

"What are you doing? Where did you bastard come from?"

Qiao Qiao raised her eyebrows as she struggled to free her right hand that was being gripped by the other party. Qiao Qiao's heart sank as she realized that the other party's strength was simply staggering! Her fist that was infamous throughout her school was held tightly by the longhaired man and could not be freed.

Without showing any hesitation, Qiao Qiao waved her left hand and threw the cup of instant noodles over. The longhaired man's eyes turned focused and he caught the cup of instant noodles with ease. He sniffed its content. "Spicy girl, eating instant noodles will harm your image of a goddess, don't you know that?"

"Bastard! Quick let go of my little sister!"

Qiao Qiao took advantage of the moment he used to speak and twisted her body, jumping out from her seat. Despite having her right hand gripped by the other party, with an abrupt turn, she launched a kick out towards the longhaired man's face.

Regardless of angle or strength, this kick of hers appeared flawless.

The longhaired male's eyes flashed. "Good leg strength! Good waist strength!"

Qiao Qiao's kick landed upon empty space. The longhaired man let go

of her fist and rapidly moved sideways, stopping right behind her. He extended his hand and pushed her shoulder, causing Qiao Qiao to fall over, and her head slammed down onto a table.

“Unnie!” Soo Soo screamed out.

The longhaired man looked on with regret at Qiao Qiao. “Beautiful girl, that is enough. Your body shape is good while both your legs and waist are first class... unfortunately, you are not my taste.”

Having said that, he extended his hand and pulled Soo Soo out. He then moved down as he smiled. “Let us go! Haha, I did not expect that this time’s target would be a soft, exclusive little sister. I like this kind of quest.”

“Release... my little sister!”

Qiao Qiao struggled to get up. Her head that had fallen onto the table was bleeding. She stood before the longhaired man. Then, with a clear “he” sound, she flew up into the air and her left leg was kicked up high overhead. A single beautiful leg struck down onto the longhaired man’s head!

“Good skill.”

The longhaired man used one hand to successfully block it. He then pushed and Qiao Qiao was thrown backwards.

“As an ordinary girl, your potential is really good. I am having mixed feelings now. I really want to take you back. Perhaps there is worth in nurturing you.”

Qiao Qiao fell down heavily upon the floor, her back burning with pain. Looking at how powerful this longhaired man was, Qiao Qiao heart had completely sunk. She bit her lips tightly. “Bastard! Let go of my sister! If you dare hurt her, I will definitely kill you!”

Qiao Qiao forced herself to stand up. However, before she could straighten herself, she suddenly heard a steady voice coming from behind her. “Qiao Qiao, duck!”

1 Fatty Wu is Chen Xiaolian's pen name.

2 In China, nouveau riche is also used to describe someone rich who lacks taste. Or someone who likes to show off their money. Raw: '土豪', Pinyin: 'tǔháo'.

3 They are talking about the online game League of Legends (LoL).

4 Barbarian King, Tryndamere from LoL has a quote given to him by the sitcom Lalala-Demacia: 'Titled the Triple Striking Barbarian, the barbaric brother with three heroic strikes, the iron-blooded man with five seconds of true manliness!'

Reason for the title is that in late game, a well-fed Tryndamere needs only three hits max to kill any other character. The five seconds of true manliness refers to his ultimate skill, which gives him invulnerability for five seconds. He has since been nerfed.

Bush-Ren aka Garen of Demacia from LoL. It came from the early days of LoL where Garen would hide in the bushes and ambush other hapless people with his skill, usually killing them in the process. Thus, he was given the title Bush Terrorist or Bush-Ren. He has since been nerfed as well.

Quote: 'Self-proclaimed to be the Might of Demacia, but known by all in jianghu as Bush-Ren, he specializes in hiding in the bushes to peep at girls butts and picking up easy wins.'

5 "Beer, beverages and mineral water; seeds, peanut and eight-treasure congee" is a standard sentence shouted by the sellers on the train.

6 Aged Jar Pickles instant noodles, a fairly popular brand in China renowned for its sourness. Raw: '老坛酸菜面', pinyin: 'lǎo tán suāncài miàn'.

Chapter 41: Roddy's Courage

The voice sounded familiar. However, Qiao Qiao did not have the time to consider that as she instinctively lowered her head...

Hu!

A mass of flesh roared as it sailed over Qiao Qiao's head, flying towards the longhaired man's head.

The longhaired man stared in shock as he intercepted the salvo with his right hand. He then saw that his hand was holding on to a fleshy ball of hair...

An adorable fat cat was glaring at him with its pair of cat eyes.

"This is... Four-Eyed War Cat?"

The longhaired man was dumbfounded and had no time to respond as Garfield's paws shot out to strike his face!

Bang!

As a B Class War Beast, its one strike caused the longhaired man to fly into the air. His head fell first onto the dining table, causing it to break apart!

The fight within the dining coach had caused the other passengers to run away in fright.

Chen Xiaolian watched as the longhaired man was sent flying and Soo Soo who was being held by him was let go in the middle of the air. Chen Xiaolian immediately leapt up, using both hands to cradle Soo Soo. As they were falling down, he positioned his body to ensure that his back would take the brunt of the fall.

Before he could get up, Qiao Qiao had already rushed forward and pulled Soo Soo away from Chen Xiaolian's bosom. Queen Qiao looked at Chen Xiaolian with surprise. "It's you?"

"Enough nonsense! Quick, run! I will hold him back!"

"You..."

“Run quick! You cannot beat him!” Chen Xiaolian shouted out.

Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth and wiped away the blood on her forehead. She placed Soo Soo on the floor and shouted rapidly. “Soo Soo, quickly run away! Go to the front to find the train marshals!”

Soo Soo who had been scared witless was sobbing. “Unnie...”

“Quick run!” Qiao Qiao forcefully pushed her. “Run away fast! Bring the train marshals over!”

Soo Soo’s eyes showed confusion for a moment. She then ran off to the front area of the train.

Chen Xiaolian watched as Qiao Qiao picked up a broken table leg. She gripped it with her hand, her face filled with resolution. He decided not to say anything.

The longhaired man had already straightened himself up from the wrecked dining table. He brushed his ruined clothes. “Heng, you really are a rookie. To think that you would use a Four-Eyed Stupid Cat as your pet. That sure shocked me. Hey, rookie! Which organization are you from? Who is your boss?”

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and stared intently at the longhaired man.

“Not going to talk? Then I will first cripple you,” The longhaired man sneered as he abruptly ripped off his outer clothes. Chen Xiaolian was shocked to see that underneath the longhaired man’s outer clothes was a protective suit. However, the colour of the protective suit was one he had never seen before, a light purple colour.

“See this? An A Class Violet Protective Suit,” The longhaired man curled up the corners of his lips. “Still thinking of stopping me?”

Chen Xiaolian remained mute as he pulled the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword that was hanging around his neck. In his hand, the sword transformed into a cross shaped sword. He roared, then raised the sword and rushed forward!

Pata.

Qiao Qiao who was standing nearby saw Chen Xiaolian rip out his pendant and transformed it into an exaggerated European looking sword as though he was performing a magic trick. The table leg that she was holding fell on to the floor.

“I... am I seeing things now?”

...

Keng!

The longhaired man flashed to the side and Chen Xiaolian's sword slash split the coach seat behind him in half! Chen Xiaolian did not show any hesitation. The sword slashed horizontally and then arced forward again.

The longhaired man sneered and twisted his body to accept the attack. The sword made contact with the waist area of the purple protective suit, causing sparks to fly out!

The longhaired man used this opportunity to get closer and struck at Chen Xiaolian's shoulder with a fist. Chen Xiaolian felt half his body becoming shaken and was forced back a few steps.

“Eh? That is a pretty good level of strength. B Class?” The longhaired man's eyes showed some degree of surprise. “Is this the standard for rookies these days?”

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and suddenly shouted out coldly. “Garfield!”

“Meow!”

Behind the longhaired man, Garfield that had been constantly looking for an opportunity now pounced forward. Its furry body plastered itself onto the longhaired man's back and its paws scratched him in succession. The longhaired man let out a scream and moved both his hands to his back. Unfortunately, Garfield's furry body was too small and the longhaired man was unable to reach him.

Chen Xiaolian had already rushed forward, as he sent the long sword ahead to the longhaired man as a greeting.

The longhaired man furiously backed away as he dodged. He did his best to move his head, arms and areas below his waist away from the sword path. The cross-shaped sword slashed down upon the surface of his protective suit, causing sparks to fly out non-stop!

Chen Xiaolian was attacking with frenzy and his sword moved about both vertically and horizontally. As the longhaired man kept retreating, the seats and area on both sides of the dining coach were cut apart under the slashes issued by Chen Xiaolian's Cross-shaped Medallion Sword.

Finally, the longhaired man managed to grab onto Garfield's neck. He lifted up the fat cat and viciously threw it in Chen Xiaolian's direction.

Chen Xiaolian caught Garfield and saw that the longhaired man's fist had already reached his face. The punch struck him squarely in his face, causing him to see stars and blood to flow out of his nose. The longhaired man's movements were fast. He followed it up with a kick onto Chen Xiaolian's stomach and Chen Xiaolian was sent sprawling backwards. He ended up in a pile of diner seat debris.

"You rookie bastard, do you not know the rules? When not within an instance dungeon, you are not allowed to summon out your pet to do battle!" The longhaired man gritted his teeth. "Just which organization are you from?"

Chen Xiaolian felt his lower abdomen burning with pain. He could not help but secretly curse inwardly.

In terms of strength, his opponent did not seem that much stronger compared to him. However, that purple A Class protective suit was too ridiculous. He could not break it at all!

The kick caused him to feel as though the intestines within his lower abdomen had been compressed into a single mass. The resulting pain made his body break out in cold sweat.

The longhaired man was about to rush him again when Qiao Qiao

immediately leapt out from the side. She brought the broken table leg down upon the longhaired man but it was directly split apart by him! Qiao Qiao then tilted her body as she performed a roundhouse kick followed by an elbow strike, then a knee slam...

In just one breath, she unleashed a flurry of combos!

Queen Qiao is indeed worthy of the title Queen. Her combination of techniques was both accurate and ruthless!

However, the longhaired man only smiled indifferently and used one hand to block those moves. He blocked off all of Qiao Qiao's offensive moves. Then, he used the palm of his hand to hit Qiao Qiao's left calf. Qiao Qiao screamed out in pain and stepped backwards. Her jerky footsteps were obvious.

The longhaired man smiled contemptuously and was about to say something. Suddenly, the watch-like item he was wearing on his wrist emitted a voice. "What happened? What are you doing?"

The longhaired man scowled and spoke out loudly. "I found the target in the dining coach, coach number 8. The target is currently moving towards you! Haha, go catch her quick. I am currently picking up an easy win."

"Stop playing about. Completing the mission is more important. Come over quickly."

The longhaired man let out a snort. He smiled contemptuously at Chen Xiaolian and Queen Qiao. "Farewell rookie. If there is another opportunity, I will give you another lesson."

After that, he sneered before moving to the windows. He smashed the windows with a punch, grabbed the windowsill and flipped his body out of the coach onto the ceiling...

"Not good! He has partners! Quick, go look for Soo Soo!"

Chen Xiaolian jumped up and turned to look at Qiao Qiao who was seated on the floor. "Are you all right?"

Qiao Qiao tried to stand up but her legs remained weak. "Go quickly!"

Do not worry about me!”

She paused; in her eyes, traces of an imploring look could be seen. “I do not know what kind of people you are... but, I beg you, save my little sister. I beg you!”

“I will do my best!” Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao one last time before running towards the direction taken by Soo Soo.

...

Chen Xiaolian ran at full speed through the train coach. Along the way, he knocked over a small cart belonging to the train crew. After running through four coaches, he saw Soo Soo being hugged by Roddy at the entrance to the hard sleeper bunk. Soo Soo was sobbing as she tried to say something. Han Bi who was on the side had also stood up; his face was filled with confusion and doubt.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly caught onto the sound of “teng teng teng teng” coming from the ceiling. It was as though something was moving past him quickly from the rooftop. His face changed and he shouted loudly to Roddy. “Roddy! Take Soo Soo and run! Run quickly!”

“What?”

The distance between them was too far apart and Roddy was unable to catch those words. He raised his head and asked the question.

It was at that moment that a harsh sound of metal being ripped apart sounded out from the ceiling of the train...

A sharp blade pierced through the train ceiling’s layer of metal. It then cut out an incision in the ceiling!

Next, a hand was stuck in. The hand grabbed onto the incision and pulled with force!

Ci la la la...

A whole part of the train ceiling’s layer of metal was torn apart to reveal a huge hole!

A hand stretched out from above with lightning like speed and caught

onto Soo Soo's hair. Without waiting for Roddy's reaction, it directly pulled Soo Soo up!

"What is that!"

Roddy let out a loud scream as he tried to catch Soo Soo's legs. However, all he saw was a fist descending upon him. He was struck and fell onto the floor.

Soo Soo cried as she was pulled out of the coach!

Chen Xiaolian's heart sank. He ran madly forward and first pulled Roddy up from the floor. "Are you all right?"

"What monster is that?" Roddy's face was filled with shock. "Train, train ceiling..."

"Someone took Soo Soo! I will go save her!"

Chen Xiaolian's body flew up with a jump. He caught the side of the torn out ceiling and his body vigorously shot through the gap. In just a moment, he had disappeared through the ceiling.

"Holy shit!" Roddy looked on with a dumbfounded expression. "Am I seeing things? When did Xiaolian become so outrageous? No wait... just what on Earth is going on here!"

Han Bi who was on the side was also shocked. "It, it seemed like... someone pulled the little girl... out through the ceiling? You... what kind of person is your friend?"

Roddy suddenly became agitated and cursed out. "{F*ck}! I don't care! It dares to snatch my friend's little sister! This senior cannot simply sit by and do nothing! Xiaolian! I am coming to help you!"

He then struggled to jump up. After successfully catching hold of the sides of the hole in the ceiling, his legs kicked about. "Han Bi! Help me up!"

Han Bi looked on blankly as he subconsciously used his hands to push Roddy's legs upwards. Roddy then crawled up the ceiling in a toad like manner...

“This... just what kind of people are these...”

...

After getting onto the roof of the train, Roddy was buffeted by the roaring winds. His mind immediately calmed down and the pounding of his hot blood seemingly vanished in an instant...

“I... what crazy son of a bitch stunt am I pulling? I am not Jackie Chan!” Roddy sprawled on the roof as he cursed out.

The train travelled along. Trees, wilderness, farmlands and buildings could be glimpsed moving past both sides of the railway...

The roaring winds almost rendered Roddy incapable of opening his mouth.

He could only subconsciously latch tightly onto whatever place he could lay his hands on as he forced his body to lie flat upon the rooftop.

However, at that moment, he raised his head and saw a scene unfold.

Chen Xiaolian was struggling on the roof, trying to move forward. Before Chen Xiaolian was a longhaired man whose hands were holding onto Soo Soo. The longhaired man lashed out with a kick, causing Chen Xiaolian to fall. After falling, Chen Xiaolian's body slid down from the roof of the train to the side. Both of Chen Xiaolian's hands were gripping tightly onto the side of the roof as his body swayed about on the side of the train...

“Damn it!”

Roddy's eyes turned red; a surge of hot blood rushed up his head!

“You struck my bro!”

His heart pounded heavily. Even though his body was still feeling numb and shrouded with fear, Roddy roared out within himself.

“Roddy! Get up! You are a male! A man! The code of brotherhood! I cannot just ignore my bro's plight! Get up, Roddy!”

Finally, a trembling figure rose up from the roof of the train. Although

his movements were clumsy and slow, it carried with it an atmosphere of one who will not retreat!

Roddy stood up on the roof. Then, seemingly to encourage himself, he let loose a shout as he charged towards the longhaired man before him.

“DEMACIA!”

1 “Picking up an easy win” here is translated from ‘虐菜’, pinyin: ‘nüè cài’, roughly translated into ‘abusing vegetables’. It means that you are someone who do not understand a game or a fight and yet could easily pick up a win against your opponent, and even causing your opponent to be unable to retaliate or do anything about it.

2 “Demacia!” is the catchphrase of Garen from the game League of Legends.

Chapter 42: The Wrong Person?

After receiving a kick, Chen Xiaolian fell down the roof of the train and his body slid down to the side. With both his hands tightly gripping onto the side of the train's roof, Chen Xiaolian watched as the longhaired man smiled derisively. Then, the longhaired man slammed down his foot.

Chen Xiaolian's left hand was trampled by the longhaired man's foot and the sound of "ka ka" could be heard coming from his bones. He endured the pain, then sent out his right hand to grab onto the other party's ankle.

The longhaired man was suddenly pulled down and his body fell flat on the roof of the train.

Soo Soo let out a scream as the longhaired man loosened his hand and the resulting momentum caused the little girl to roll down towards the side of the train. Chen Xiaolian had no choice but to let go of his hold on the longhaired man and used his hand to grab Soo Soo's wrist...

Soo Soo shrieked sharply as the train galloped forward. She had her wrist held by Chen Xiaolian and was hanging down the side of the galloping train. Thanks to the train's high level of speed, her body swung back and forth and the little girl was scared to the point where tears could no longer come out...

"A a a ah!"

Chen Xiaolian struggled to make a toss to throw Soo Soo up to the roof of the train.

At this moment, Roddy who was shouting "Demacia" had rushed up. He had both his arms open, just like a crab.

Chen Xiaolian shouted. "Roddy! Catch!"

Roddy suddenly saw Soo Soo's figure sailing through the air, moving towards him. He quickly caught her with both hands and the two of them fell down upon the roof.

Chen Xiaolian who had one hand hooked upon the roof finally managed

to place his foot onto the upper ledge of a train window. With a jump, he leapt back up onto the roof.

The longhaired man had also gotten up. However, he did not bother with Chen Xiaolian and headed towards Roddy.

Roddy had one hand placed upon the roof as support and was barely able to lift up half his body when he saw the longhaired man lunge towards him. Seeing the other party coming towards him, Roddy forced himself up. He sent a left hook forward but had his wrist gripped tightly by the longhaired man. The resulting pain caused his body to bend down.

The longhaired man sneered. Roddy then used his right hand to retrieve something from his bosom and threw it towards the longhaired man's head.

The longhaired man tilted his head to dodge and caught sight of a mobile phone flying past him. He laughed out with disdain. "Idiot!"

However, just as he was speaking out, he heard a whistling sound of wind coming from behind...

Pa!

A heavy blow landed on the back of his head!

The longhaired man's eyes blacked out for an instant. He then turned around to see Chen Xiaolian behind him, holding onto a mobile phone! The exterior shape had remained intact!

The longhaired man felt so much pain that he could see stars spinning before him. He then looked at the item in Chen Xiaolian's hand and asked in a muffled voice. "Nokia?"

"Heng!" Chen Xiaolian raised his hand and came at him again. This time though, the longhaired man was prepared and he dodged to the side. He then landed a punch onto Chen Xiaolian's shoulders before gripping his wrist and executing a shoulder throw!

Chen Xiaolian was slammed down on the roof and he almost lost his breath. In his mind, he thought: Damn, too disadvantageous!

In terms of strength, he seemed about equal to his opponent. However... there was too big of a difference in fighting skills!

As an ordinary high school student, how could he know any fighting skills. As for this longhaired man, he was obviously equipped with a great deal of fighting techniques.

Even though the quality of their bodies was about the same, Chen Xiaolian could only end up being beaten up by him.

At that moment, another head emerged from the hole in the roof. Qiao Qiao struggled up the hole and saw Soo Soo being held by Roddy. She then rushed madly forward. She did not rush towards Soo Soo but instead flew forward with her knee to the front, slamming straight onto the back of the longhaired man!

Due to the momentum behind this knee strike, the longhaired man's body staggered for a moment. He then became furious. Turning around, he extended his hand to grab Qiao Qiao's hair. With a forceful tug, he pulled Qiao Qiao down onto the roof.

"Bunch of rascals!" The longhaired man's face turned grim. "I had originally not wanted to kill anyone! You are the ones looking for death!"

He lifted his right hand over his head...

A sphere of golden flames suddenly appeared upon his palm. With a "hong", it was brought down upon Qiao Qiao who was on the roof!

Chen Xiaolian leapt forward in the nick of time and pulled Qiao Qiao to the other side!

The longhaired man's fist that was covered in a golden light smashed down upon the roof, causing a sudden harsh, tearing sound to blast out! A huge hole was blasted open by his punch! The hole was so big that it was possible to look down onto the insides of the train with ease...

Within a hard sleeper bunk, a pair of both male and female were huddled together, both holding onto each other's face as they mutually kissed...

“I will fight you to the end!”

Chen Xiaolian spread opened his arms and aggressively caught the longhaired man in an embrace. He then pushed the longhaired man with him down the hole!

They both fell down from the top into the train coach!

The couple who were originally resting within the bunk were scared silly as they watched two people fall down from the hole in the ceiling. Their fall broke the table inside the room into smithereens and the items on it, fruits, peanuts, seeds and cola were all sent flying.

Chen Xiaolian exerted all his might to engage in a wrestle with the longhaired man... he was clear that the longhaired man far outstripped him in terms of fighting techniques. In order to gain even a sliver of hope to win, he needed to get into a tangle with the longhaired man. That way, the longhaired man would have no chance to utilize his superior fighting techniques!

The two of them grappled with one another and Chen Xiaolian had to suffer from several punches, resulting in him vomiting out a mouthful of blood onto the longhaired man's face. The longhaired man's face was a mask of savagery as killing intent spilled out of his eyes!

Chen Xiaolian returned several punches back to the longhaired man. However, the longhaired man had the purple protective suit; Chen Xiaolian felt as though his fists were punching onto a slab of metal.

“Go die!”

The longhaired man viciously cried out and his hand suddenly produced a dagger out from his waist. The dagger then stabbed down onto Chen Xiaolian!

Chen Xiaolian forced his body to twist aside, causing the trajectory of the incoming dagger to change slightly. It then stabbed down into his shoulder

Chen Xiaolian let out a scream due to the pain. He saw blood flowing out without restraint from his wound and yet the longhaired man's hand

continued gripping onto the dagger as he attempted to turn the blade...

Chen Xiaolian screamed out miserably and he struck out with his fists and elbows towards the longhaired man's body several times. The longhaired man though, extended out with his other hand and began strangling Chen Xiaolian's neck!

Chen Xiaolian could feel his breathing rate becoming slower while his blood kept flowing out from his shoulder wound. As for the longhaired man, he was on top of Chen Xiaolian, his expression becoming increasingly ferocious...

It was at that moment, that a "hong" sound resonated!

A dining table smashed down onto the longhaired man's head!

The longhaired man's eyes rolled up for a moment and his hold on Chen Xiaolian was suddenly lost. Chen Xiaolian quickly rolled over to the side. He watched, as the longhaired man remained bent over, both his hands holding onto his head for a moment before dodging over to another side.

Raising his head, Chen Xiaolian saw a youngster standing there with a pair of thick and intertwined eyebrows.

Han Bi panted as he looked on at the scene before him with surprise... he looked down at the dining table that he had smashed apart...

Back then, he had heard a noise coming over from here. He then ran over to find Chen Xiaolian being pressed down by the longhaired man as he used a dagger to stab into Chen Xiaolian's shoulder...

When he saw that, Han Bi did not give too much thought about it and only instinctively wanted to help this new friend of his. The hot blood of youth led him to rush forward without showing any hesitation...

He smoothly pulled up a dining table beside him...

Han Bi had forgotten that the tables on the train were all welded together with the train floor!

He pulled the table; then, following a tearing sound, the table was lifted

up using an inexplicable strength of unknown origin. The table then arced down onto the longhaired man's head!

A strike!

Seeing Chen Xiaolian extricate himself, Han Bi then reacted. He stood there and gaped as he looked down upon his own hands.

"I... how could I have so much strength?"

...

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and pulled the dagger out of his shoulder, causing blood to spray out. He did not hesitate to produce a Mid Class Healing Beast Blood and proceeded to swallow it.

The longhaired man had stood up and stared intently at Han Bi. He looked long and hard at him. "Eh? You... you are a newbie? Mistake! It's you!"

The longhaired man's face suddenly changed. It was as if he had suddenly realized something important.

Chen Xiaolian had already gotten up himself. He quickly summoned out the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword and charged forward again.

"Linked Dual Slash, Cross Slash!"

A light in the shape of a standard cross was imprinted onto the longhaired man's body, throwing him back. Several seats within the train coach were wrecked as a result. Chen Xiaolian grabbed onto Han Bi and shouted. "Han Bi! Have you awakened?"

"Wha... what? I do not understand what you are talking about!" Han Bi remained immobile as he looked on in surprise at his own hands. "I... What happened to me just now? I... How did I do that?"

"Enough nonsense!" Chen Xiaolian shouted. "Let's fight this fellow together! Quick, use your skill!"

"Ski... Skill?"

Han Bi's face turned distressful. "What are you talking about? I do not

understand a single word that you are saying.”

Chen Xiaolian looked on helplessly and could only charge forward alone. His cross shaped sword arced through the air, but the longhaired man had the protection of the protective suit. The longhaired man dodged around for a bit, then executed a few moves and forced Chen Xiaolian to retreat.

The longhaired man lowered his head to examine his protective suit and saw a shallow cross-shaped mark on it. His face turned irritated. “Do you have any idea how expensive it is to repair this mark? Bastard!”

Chen Xiaolian gasped for breath and looked at the longhaired man. He became increasingly frustrated – this fellow is simply far stronger than him!

At this moment, a sound came from behind him, from the other end of the train coach.

“Just what is going on? Do you really need to spend so much time on a rookie? Where is the target?”

Chen Xiaolian rapidly turned his body sideways to look back. He saw a middle-aged man wearing a trench coat slowly walking over from the other side of the coach.

This trench coat wearing middle-aged man had a short and gaunt stature, however, his cold and indifferent eyes...

“Another one?” Chen Xiaolian’s heart sank badly.

The longhaired man fiercely spat out his spittle. “Pei! I nearly scored an own goal. Earlier I had identified the wrong person and thought of some little girl as the target. There, the target is right here. You go catch him. I will deal with this sword-wielding rookie! He is mine!”

Having heard the conversation between the two of them, the gears of Chen Xiaolian’s mind moved quickly...

Own goal?

Wrong person?

Target is right here?

He quickly turned his head to look at Han Bi and yelled out. "Han Bi! Quickly run!"

...

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man curled up the corners of his lips and sneered. Suddenly, his figure flickered!

So fast!

Chen Xiaolian felt as though there was something wrong with his eyes!

The trench coat wearing man appeared beside Han Bi, his palm cut down like a blade onto Han Bi's neck. The thick browed youngster's head tilted and fell onto the floor.

"Done! Task complete, let's go."

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man carried Han Bi on his shoulders and moved to a side. With one punch, he broke open the windows. "Let's go! Your actions this time is too big! Problems will arise."

"I..." The longhaired man stared at Chen Xiaolian with fury. He pointed at Chen Xiaolian and said. "Rookie! If not for the rule to limit power usage, I would have killed you! Remember, don't ever let me see you in an instance dungeon!"

After saying that, he pulled back his finger and made a throat slitting gesture.

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man carried Han Bi and leapt out of the train, disappearing into the surroundings. The longhaired man gave a sneer and turned around. However, he instead leapt up onto the roof of the train!

Chen Xiaolian immediately shouted out. "Not good!"

He rushed over to the place where a hole was made on the roof of the train to see the longhaired man running over at a rapid speed.

Soon, the sound of Qiao Qiao screaming could be heard. "Soo Soo!"

The longhaired man let out a triumphant laughter. Chen Xiaolian could only watch as the longhaired man carried Soo Soo with him as he jumped off the train, his figure flitting past outside the windows and he landed onto the wilderness beside the railways.

Chen Xiaolian quickly jumped up onto the roof. There, he saw Qiao Qiao bent over the side of the roof as she shouted with all her might into the distance.

“Stop shouting! I will go snatch her back!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted. “Roddy! Take care of Qiao Qiao!”

After that, he took two steps back and inhaled deeply as he prepared to jump down the train...

En, I am B Class after all. If they can do it, I should not have any problems doing so, right?

However, before he could make the jump, Qiao Qiao seized Chen Xiaolian's arm. “Bring me together!”

“What?”

“Bring me down together! We are running out of time! Quick!”

“I cannot do that! You...”

“If you won't bring me down, then I will just jump down myself!”

Having said that, Qiao Qiao suddenly let go of Chen Xiaolian's arm. She ran towards the side of the roof ...

“... damn it!” Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly. He moved forward and grabbed Qiao Qiao in an embrace. Then, he took a deep breath and both his legs pushed with all its might. His figure was propelled out towards the farmlands beyond the railway...

“Xiaolian!”

Roddy was scared silly from the spectacle. He quickly rushed to the side of the roof and saw Chen Xiaolian standing up on the farmlands that was now far behind the train. Chen Xiaolian waved to him. “I am all right!

You take care!”

Chapter 43: KO

“Are you done throwing a ruckus? How long do you intend to hold onto me?”

Chen Xiaolian lowered his head to look at Qiao Qiao's hand, which was tightly gripping onto his leg. Chen Xiaolian's face was solemn as he said. “They are not the type of people that you can handle, yet you insist on coming...”

“That is my little sister!” Qiao Qiao bit down hard on her lips and stared at Chen Xiaolian. “No matter what, I must protect her! If this were to happen to you, if your loved ones were to be bullied, would you consider whether you have the ability to beat the opponent before you choose to step up?”

“...” Chen Xiaolian sighed and nodded his head. “Very well. Your words make sense... however, can you let go off my clothes now.”

Qiao Qiao glared at Chen Xiaolian. “I dare not let go. Because... it seems that, those people and you are the same, beyond ordinary. Back when you were fighting one another on the train, were you using super powers?”

“... You can assume it to be that.”

“Then, do you know them? I heard the longhaired bastard calling you a rookie. It seems that you are of the same type... Since that is the case, now that they have escaped, I must closely follow you. That is the only way for me to find my little sister.”

“... I really do not know those people. They came to kidnap your sister while I have been trying to help you,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly.

“However, my intuition tells me that only by following you would I be able to find them. As I said, you and they seemed to be of the same kind.”

Chen Xiaolian knew that this was not something that could be explained with just a few words. He simply turned his head to face another direction. “Let us go! They are going that way.”

“How do you know that?”

“As you said, we are of the same kind.”

Chen Xiaolian curled his lips.

Within the radar interface of the system, the green dots were clearly moving fast in that direction.

Chen Xiaolian recalled that within the radar display of the system, a red dot would signify a monster; a yellow dot would signify NPC and a green dot would represent a Player or an Awakened. It also represents himself, a system irregularity.

...

The two of them quickly advanced towards the direction shown by the radar display. They were currently in a suburban village with large tracts of farmlands. However, due to the fact that winter just concluded, and that spring has yet to begin, the lands were desolate and bare.

Chen Xiaolian ran at full speed, however Qiao Qiao was unable to keep up in just a matter of moments – this queen who was bursting with fury had suffered from an injury to her ankle. Although she tried her best to endure, her speed gradually fell.

In his heart, Chen Xiaolian was secretly feeling anxious. The one matter that kept him relieved was that according to the radar, the other party's speed was not too fast. It appeared that they were in no hurry to escape.

The both of them ran across a farmland's irrigation ditch and saw a tile-roofed building. A bicycle was resting upon it walls; even though it was already rusty, it seemed to be useable.

Chen Xiaolian quickly went over to check it out. “It is useable!” After considering the circumstances, he retrieved his wallet and placed down his last two red-coloured bills onto the ground where the bicycle was originally placed . He then picked up a stone and placed it on them as paperweight.

“You are quite considerate,” Qiao Qiao's eyes narrowed at the sight.

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He got on the bicycle and patted on

the back seat. "Quick, get up!"

Chen Xiaolian put all his might into the pedals, cycling at an incredible speed.

His B Class Physique and Endurance were put to play and the distance between the two sides on the radar display was rapidly closing up.

As the distance between the two sides was reduced to about less than 500 metres, the four green dots of the other side suddenly stopped down in a certain area.

Chen Xiaolian abruptly stopped the bicycle.

"Why did you stop chasing?" Qiao Qiao asked impatiently.

"First, let us discuss our strategy," Chen Xiaolian got off the bicycle and put it on the side of the street.

Chen Xiaolian returned Qiao Qiao's gaze and said in a deep voice. "That longhaired man is very strong. I am not his match. In addition... he have another partner. I feel that his partner's strength is also no less powerful. Considering our current state, I fear that even if we manage to chase up to them..."

"Even if we cannot beat them, we should still fight it out," Qiao Qiao looked at Chen Xiaolian and quickly continued. "I know that I have no right to ask for your help. You have already given us so much assistance back on train, protecting Soo Soo. I do not know the reason as to why you are doing all this. But still... Chen Xiaolian, I thank you!"

Qiao Qiao took a deep breath while maintaining a resolute expression. "When we chase up to them, you focus on finding a way to rescue them, then... I will stay behind and stop them! I will buy you enough time to get away. Even if I were to die, I will certainly hold them!"

"... you really do not care about your own life," Chen Xiaolian let out a strained smile. "Let us not even talk about how you do not have enough strength. Even if... did you not consider the fact that you are a young girl? For a young girl to end up in the hands of two bandits... are you not afraid about what would happen to you?"

“She is my sister, even if I have to put my life on the line, I must still save her!”

Chen Xiaolian squinted, then he turned to look in another direction – the other party remained immobile, staying still in that same spot.

Could it be... are they deliberately waiting for us to catch up?

That seemed likely. After all, they have a higher level of strength and have nothing to fear. Perhaps they remained with the intention of finishing us all off.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and hesitated for a moment. He then extended a fist before Qiao Qiao and slowly unfolded his palm.

Lying upon his palm was a small and unique looking syringe.

“This is?”

“Genetic Enhancement Serum. I will say this first, I do not know if there will be any side effects to using this. However...” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “After using this, perhaps you will be able to become stronger. You seem to be very proficient in terms of fighting techniques; if this serum works on you, then... perhaps you will become a force to be reckoned with.”

Chen Xiaolian paused before continuing in a low tone. “However, I really do not know if this item would bring about any side effects... because you are an ordinary person... you are not an Awakened or a Player...”

Before he could even finish, Qiao Qiao had already snatched away the syringe and showed no hesitation as she pierced it onto her shoulder!

A few seconds later...

“How do you feel?”

Qiao Qiao inhaled deeply. “I don’t feel anything... but...”

She took two steps back. Then, without any indication whatsoever, she suddenly delivered a kick. As the toes of her leg were seemingly about to land on Chen Xiaolian’s face, a strong breeze blasted Chen Xiaolian in

the face. He then subconsciously retreated one step backwards.

“It seemed... this sense of strength does not feel the same as it used to,” Qiao Qiao’s eyes flickered and she turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. “The reason why you have such a strong strength is because of this item? Oh, right! Your wounds! I had clearly seen a bloody wound on your shoulder earlier. But now, that wound... why is it not bleeding anymore?”

“There is no time to explain in detail.” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. “When we chase up to them, act accordingly. If there is an opportunity, go save them and take them away. Don’t just think about fighting... I will stay at the rear to slow them down.”

“You... that is too dangerous!” Traces of emotions and gratitude could be seen in Qiao Qiao’s eyes.

“I have a final life-saving trick,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “I really do not want to use it unless as a last resort.”

...

“Are we really not going to leave?”

The longhaired man leaned upon a tree and glanced at the trench coat wearing middle-aged man. “Are we waiting for them here? Do we finish them off?”

“I hate being followed,” The trench coat wearing middle-aged man gave a “heng”.

“Why not get rid of them back when we were in the train?”

“Idiot! Your actions in the train were too big! With that level of action, it would be easy for us to be discovered. How will the consequences of your actions get cleared away? If it ends up affecting the setting of this world, the Development Team will definitely find out about it.”

“So, you lured them here?”

“There will be no one to bear witness here,” The trench coat wearing middle-aged man coldly replied. “Kill them. I do not care which organization that rookie is from. Since he dares to disrupt our task, then

he is an enemy. Killing him can also be considered as a lesson for that rookie's organization."

As he spoke, the trench coat wearing middle-aged man suddenly frowned. He lowered his head and cast a glance at Soo Soo who was seated on the ground. She had her eyes covered as she cried non-stop.

"Annoying. I hate children of this age the most," The trench coat wearing middle-aged man gritted his teeth. "If she keeps crying, then just knock her unconscious."

"Don't do that. You really have no clue how to appreciate beauty," The longhaired man smiled and walked to Soo Soo's side. He extended his hand to rub her hair. "She is such a beautiful and adorable little loli. You would actually have the heart to strike her?"

With his hand upon Soo Soo's head, Soo Soo became scared and her body trembled persistently.

"I meant what I said, knock her unconscious. If you won't do it, then I will," The trench coat wearing middle-aged man coldly replied.

"All right, all right. As long as you are happy," The longhaired man's fingers slipped down upon the back of Soo Soo's neck. With a light tap, Soo Soo was rendered unconscious.

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man smiled contemptuously. "They are here!"

Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao slowly came over from beyond a fruit tree.

In his hands, Chen Xiaolian was holding onto the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword.

"Hahaha! You truly are a naïve and idiotic rookie," The longhaired man looked at Chen Xiaolian. "You actually brought an ordinary person with you as you chased us. This little girl's skill is indeed good. Unfortunately, she is just an ordinary person."

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man scowled and moved to face Chen Xiaolian. As the distance between the two sides decreased to only 10

steps, they stopped.

“Just which organization are you from, rookie?” The trench coat wearing middle-aged man arrogantly produced a box of cigarettes and lit one up. He then looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Do you smoke?”

Chen Xiaolian slowly shook his head. His eyes were focused on the trench coat wearing middle-aged man – clearly, this fellow has a higher position compared to the longhaired man.

“You are not willing to speak out the name of your organization? Then, could you tell us your name?” The middle-aged man frowned and inhaled deeply with the cigarette before slowly puffing the smoke out. “I do not mean anything by it. It is just that it has been a long time since I have met such a ballsy rookie. You actually dared to chase after two veteran Awakened ones. Could it be that your organization never taught you that in such circumstances, you need to protect your own safety first?”

“My name is Chen Xiaolian,” Chen Xiaolian stared at middle-aged man’s fingers that were holding onto the cigarette. He then turned his gaze towards Soo Soo who was on the ground and the unconscious Han Bi on the side. “These two are my friends; I cannot allow you to take them away.”

“Friends? What a complicated matter this is,” The trench coat wearing middle-aged man pondered. “We cannot give you this male. As for the little girl, I have no interest in her. If you can win against my partner, then you can take the little girl with you. However, if you cannot ... then you will have to die here.”

“Oh? If we win against him, we can take the little girl away?” Chen Xiaolian pointed to the longhaired man. He then asked the trench coat wearing middle-aged man again. “You will not interfere?”

“My target is this male boy. As for that little girl, she is too noisy. If you have what it takes to take her away, I will instead be happy,” The middle-aged man took another puff on the cigarette and narrowed his eyes as he looked at Chen Xiaolian. “What do you say?”

“I will do it! I will save my little sister!”

Qiao Qiao took a step forward.

“You?”

The longhaired man looked at Qiao Qiao and suddenly laughed out. “I say, little girl. You should just forget about it. Even though you are very spicy and your skills are very good... unfortunately, you are an ordinary person. Your strength is too lacking. Could it be you do not understand this logic? In face of absolute power, all your skills and techniques are pointless. I do admire your fighting skills, but with your strength... all you can do is bully the ordinary people.”

“Strength you say? I feel like trying it out,” Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth heavily and slowly took two steps forward. “Enough nonsense, we will continue after the fight! If I win, I want to take my little sister away!”

“Haha! Very well, I will make you give up then,” The longhaired man laughed. “I like stubborn girls like you... soon, I will knock out all your teeth!”

The longhaired man flexed his wrist and smiled derisively. “Come, I will let you make your move first. You have a pair of beautiful legs, kick them out again for me to admire.”

“You want to see them? Good! I will... kick it for you to see!”

Just as Qiao Qiao uttered the word “I”, her body had already taken a step forward in a dash!

Under the strengthening effect of the Genetic Enhancement Serum, Qiao Qiao’s Physique had been elevated to that of B Class!

With the B Class strength and speed, Qiao Qiao’s action this time around became completely different for the longhaired man!

Seeing that the distance between them had been reduced to a mere few steps, the longhaired man reacted only to see a kick flying towards his chest!

By the time Qiao Qiao said the word “kick”...

Peng!

A muffled bang resounded out!

The longhaired man's body received the kick and was forced to stagger backwards!

The sudden change in the strength behind Qiao Qiao's attacks was beyond the longhaired man's calculations!

As he was retreating after being caught off guard by the kick, Qiao Qiao had already rushed in close to him!

Queen Qiao leapt upwards, her right knee bent as she soared. A knee strike hit the longhaired man's lower abdomen!

At that very moment, Qiao Qiao finished uttering the word "see"!

Despite having the protection of the purple protective suit, the powerful impact induced an unbearable pain for the longhaired man! As a result of the pain, his body bent down.

Qiao Qiao grabbed hold of the longhaired man's hair, as though she was going to perform a hug. Then, her right hand savagely thrust his head down as her left knee rose up fiercely!

Bang!

Yet another knee strike!

This time, the knee struck the longhaired man in the face! He let out a miserable scream as his nose begun to madly bleed out! His mouth was filled with blood as his body fell down on his haunches!

From the moment she let loose her flying kick and then followed up with the two knee strikes, Qiao Qiao have now successively displayed her fighting techniques! Even then, she did not stop. Her body charged forward again and her left hand hooked onto the longhaired man's shoulder. Her right fist then continuously bombarded the longhaired man's ribs!

With her B Class strength, those punches were no different from thunderbolts, each creating a pounding and reverberating sound! The longhaired man's ribs suffered from intense pain and he struggled with

all he had to free himself of Qiao Qiao. Qiao Qiao released her hold and took one step backwards, her right leg lifted up high into the air!

An axe kick!

With her toes over her head, the foot arced down in a chopping motion! Her heel directly hacked down onto the longhaired man's head!

Bang!

The longhaired man fell face first onto the ground, his face slamming onto the ground!

... Flying kick, knee strike, punch to the ribs and a final axe kick!

The longhaired man never got the chance to resist or counter and was beaten senseless by Queen Qiao's tempestuous attacks!

After receiving one round of her attacks, this ruthless character who had been showing off his overbearing attitude back in the train was now face planted down the dusty ground.

He raised his head, blood spraying out from his mouth and several broken teeth were vomited out...

Qiao Qiao had already finished brushing her hands by then as she coldly asked. "Who did you say was going to knock out whose teeth?"

...

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man was dumbfounded by the spectacle, the half-burnt cigarette in his hand fell down to the ground.

Chen Xiaolian's mind lurched: I... It seems I may have awakened a terrifying mother Tyrannosaurus Rex...

...

...

1 Red coloured yuan bill generally denotes the 100 yuan bank bill, the biggest one to date.

Chapter 44: Bloody Loli

After their face off, Qiao Qiao KO-ed the longhaired man!

Equipped with the strength of B Class, in addition to her originally superb fighting techniques, she seemingly became the perfect embodiment of strength and skill! As for the longhaired man, his actions of underestimating the enemy led him to suffer a most miserable lesson!

The longhaired man sprawled on the floor and coughed out blood. It appeared that he no longer have the strength to even get up. Seeing that, Qiao Qiao quickly moved forward to embrace Soo Soo. Observing that Soo Soo was unconscious, she shouted out angrily. "What have you done to my little sister?"

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man turned around. "She was too noisy, so we knocked her out..."

He then glanced at Chen Xiaolian. "What kind of medicine did you give her? Giving items to an ordinary person, do you not know that this is against the rules? You rookie, do you really know nothing at all?"

"Why are you talking nonsense? Just kill them!" The longhaired man struggled to get up from the ground. The middle-aged man gave a "heng" before producing a Mid Class Healing Beast Blood and handed it to him.

"Qiao Qiao, take Soo Soo away first," Chen Xiaolian shouted.

Shua!

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man's body flashed and was suddenly behind Qiao Qiao, obstructing her.

"Didn't you say that if we win against him we can take the girl away?" Chen Xiaolian asked in a deep voice.

"Oh, I did say if you win against him, I did not say injure him," The middle-aged man laughed out in a petty and shameless manner. "No matter what, he is still my partner. Even though I do not like this fellow, I would lose face if he gets injured."

“I knew it would not be so easy,” With a “shua”, the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword in Chen Xiaolian’s hand revealed itself. “Qiao Qiao, if you get the opportunity, run away with Soo Soo!”

After that, Chen Xiaolian brandished the long sword and charged towards the middle-aged man.

The cold light from the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword flashed out, but the middle-aged man’s speed was as fast as a ghost! His body flickered and it disappeared. Chen Xiaolian then felt a hand coming in contact with his waist... a sense of pain was felt on his waist area!

He turned around to see the middle-aged man holding onto a dagger coated in blood. The middle-aged man then rapidly distanced himself from Chen Xiaolian!

So fast!

Chen Xiaolian could clearly feel that his waist had suffered from a stab.

He gritted his teeth and rushed towards the middle-aged man again while shouting. “Qiao Qiao! Run!”

“Not so easy!”

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man sneered. His body was like that of a ghost; with a flash he appeared before Qiao Qiao!

Qiao Qiao shouted out. Despite holding onto Soo Soo with one hand, she still managed to execute a kick towards the other party’s face! The middle-aged man dodged to the side with incredible speed! Without waiting for Qiao Qiao’s legs to be lowered, he had already circled around to her back. A muffled groan could be heard coming from Qiao Qiao. When the man retreated two steps back, Qiao Qiao’s shoulder could be seen suffering from a cut.

This person was too fast!

Chen Xiaolian’s heart fell!

The enemy’s speed is definitely above B Class!

Or perhaps... this is his Special Skill?

With one hand clutching onto his waist, Chen Xiaolian grunted and brandished his sword as he rushed forward again. However, this middle-aged man kept shuttling between Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao. Even though the both of them were working together, they were still struck by the dagger in his hand several times. In the three or five times that they faced off, Chen Xiaolian ended up with several new wounds on him. Seeing Qiao Qiao trying to protect Soo Soo, the middle-aged man saw his opportunity. His dagger came down behind her, causing both her clothes and flesh to be split and blood to flow!

Their breaths became increasingly heavier whereas the middle-aged man was able to let out a long laugh. His body moved back and forth rapidly; he then put some distance between himself and the two of them. Standing somewhere about tens of steps away, he lowered his head to look at the longhaired man who was seated on the ground. "Have you watched enough?"

The longhaired man furiously stared at him and covered his bleeding mouth. He let out two coughs. "Do not kill that long legged girl! Her life is mine!"

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man laughed out and turned to Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao. "Your character is not bad. Unfortunately... this world requires strength in order to assert oneself. Are you still not willing to surrender?"

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and firmly shook his head. Just as he was about to raise his sword and duke it out again, he suddenly felt his body going soft.

He could feel all the strength in his body flowing away rapidly. It was as though there was a certain power sucking away his bodily strength at a rapid rate! Both his legs turned soft and he fell to his knees. He thrust the sword down the ground with all his might so that he could lean upon it and stop himself from completely falling onto the ground.

Beside him, Qiao Qiao was facing the same predicament. She was already seated on the ground, trying hard to prop herself up. However, her

arms turned soft and her face fell to the ground.

“I...” Chen Xiaolian could feel that even the act of talking was very difficult.

[Prompt: You have been affected by an opponent's poison type skill.]

Po... Poison?

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt discouraged!

“You...” He raised his head to look at the trench coat wearing middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man had already produced another cigarette and lit it up. He leisurely looked at Chen Xiaolian and smiled disdainfully. “Is it finally taking effect? Heng... how does my poison skill taste?”

“...” Chen Xiaolian silently looked at the other party. His hand turned soft and was no longer capable of holding onto the sword. The Cross-shaped Medallion Sword fell onto the ground. With its supply of energy from its owner cut off, it rapidly transformed back into a pendant.

His heartbeat rate seemed to have increased several times. He could clearly hear the sound of his heart beating.

It was obvious to Chen Xiaolian that he was becoming increasingly weaker...

“This... what kind of damnable skill is this...” Chen Xiaolian spat out. “You smeared poison on your weapon?”

“Idiot, you really are a rookie,” The longhaired man seated on the side spoke with a lisp. “His skill is Poison Constitution. This skill has no cool down time and can place poison onto anything he touches. Smear poison? You rookie, you still cannot separate yourself from the thought process of ordinary people.”

“Don't worry, the poison won't kill you,” The middle-aged man coldly said. “This poison will only let you enter a continuous weakened state as it erodes away all the strength you can muster.”

After saying that, he walked to Chen Xiaolian's side and sent out a kick

towards Chen Xiaolian's face!

Chen Xiaolian fell horizontally with a mouthful of blood. Half his face suddenly swelled up.

The trench Coat wearing middle-aged man stooped down to pick up the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword that had transformed into a pendant. "I am taking this loot."

The longhaired man had already straightened himself. Although his movements were still somewhat limp, he produced a dagger and moved towards Qiao Qiao.

He cast a glance at Soo Soo who was lying on the floor at the side, then back to Qiao Qiao. "Heng, your little sister? You do not look the same at all... I hate this kind of spicy arrogant girls the most! Do you think you are a queen? Heng!"

After he said that, he stabbed down with his dagger and pierced it into Qiao Qiao's leg! Qiao Qiao screamed out miserably and her body tried to struggle. The longhaired man pulled out the dagger and examined the blood on the dagger. "You like using your leg to kick others, don't you?"

After finishing his sentence, the dagger fell down again, piercing into Qiao Qiao's other leg!

This time, Qiao Qiao bit hard upon her teeth, exerting all her might to stop herself from screaming out in pain. She only stared at the longhaired man.

"Don't look at me that way. I will pull out every single one of your teeth," The longhaired man laughed fiercely before sending a backhand towards Qiao Qiao's face.

The strike caused Qiao Qiao to cough out blood. Her body fell and was coincidentally thrown onto Soo Soo's body.

A mouthful of was blood sprayed onto Soo Soo's face.

Qiao Qiao was trembling but then she suddenly saw Soo Soo's pair of closed eyes... opened.

“Unnie?”

Soo Soo spoke out with a soft voice.

Strangely, her voice was soft, delicate and yet her tone was cold and calm!

“You... vomited blood.”

Soo Soo suddenly got up. She extended her sleeves, using it to wipe the corner of Qiao Qiao’s mouth.

Qiao Qiao’s body quivered! She stared at Soo Soo, a hint of sadness could be seen in her eyes. “You... again...”

This little loli’s face was devoid of happiness and sorrow! Her big pair of shining eyes had seemingly become deprived of any emotions.

Soo Soo’s gaze fell onto the longhaired man’s figure. “You... Were you the one who beat my sister?”

The longhaired man’s face revealed a peculiar smile. “You woke up?”

Soo Soo moved both her hands and feet and got up in a rather awkward manner. After steadying herself, she forcibly lifted her head and directed a gaze at the longhaired man. She asked in a very serious tone. “You... were you the one who beat up my sister?”

“Hahahaha... little loli, if you are thinking of begging me to spare your sister, then I will take your adorability into consideration and grudgingly let her die a quick death.”

Soo Soo looked at the longhaired man; her beautiful eyebrows came together in a frown. “I do not like the way you talk.”

“Eh?”

“You wounded my sister, I do not like that,” Soo Soo seemed to sigh. Her voice turned low as though she was talking to herself. “This is all due to that weak little thing. She always needs sister’s protection, always causing problems for sister. That is why I have to always come out to pick up after her...”

“What are you saying?” The longhaired man frowned. “Why do I feel that you are... different from before?”

Upon Soo Soo’s face, a hint of a smile... emerged!

At that moment, the little girl’s face was covered in blood. Upon her face was a pure and sweet smile unique to little loli’s of her age. However, her pair of eyes... were cold and empty!

Soo Soo raised her left hand, her index finger was slightly bent but pointing towards the longhaired man.

“Phoenix, burn him to death.”

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man stared at Soo Soo. His face abruptly changed and he shouted loudly. “Something is not right! She looks like...”

He did not get the chance to finish his words!

A boom resonated and an orange reddish flaming dragon roared out from Soo Soo’s fingertips!

The depths of the flames seemed to be transforming into a flying bird, which then spread out both its wings!

It let out a clearly audible and loud cry!

Blazing phoenix!

...

The magnificent roaring flames enveloped the longhaired man in an instant! The cries of the blazing phoenix continued endlessly. The middle-aged man’s face changed into a frenzy and he attempted to escape. However, despite his incredible speed, the flames discharged by the blazing phoenix shrouded his surroundings in merely an instant!

The trench coat wearing middle-aged man did not even have the time to scream before he was sucked into the flames!

Several exploding noises could be heard and two mass of flames burst open!

A purple protective suit fell out! It had already been split in half!

A body that was charred beyond recognition slumped onto the floor and broke into pieces almost immediately!

The middle-aged man was still struggling as he howled out. A white radiance was emitted out from his body. However, the orange reddish flames rapidly devoured that white radiance. In the end, the white radiance only managed to maintain itself for a space of several breaths...

“How, how is this possible... argh!”

The flames transformed into a flaming stream which tore the white coloured radiance apart and poured into the middle-aged man’s opened mouth! It was not long before his eyes lit up and fire spouted out of his eyes! The blazing flames were incinerating his entire body... finally, his body turned to ashes...

...

Soo Soo remained standing at her original spot. There was a calm expression and gaze on her face. It was a terrifying calmness!

Two living person were burnt to death under her direction, even their corpses were burnt to ashes!

As for her, she did not even bat an eye!

All she did was raise her sleeves to wipe away the blood on her face – at that moment, Soo Soo’s small and adorable face was partially smeared with blood. The bloodstains upon her originally innocent face gave her a peculiar appearance...

...

Chen Xiaolian was rendered speechless; he stared with wide opened eyes at Soo Soo.

This... Is this still... the same girl on the deserted island... that timid and cowardly girl who needed his assurance? Or that teary eyed little girl who was gripping tightly onto the chocolate in her hands?

She...

Soo Soo turned around to see Chen Xiaolian. A smile finally appeared on her face.

“Xiaolian oppa.”

Chen Xiaolian. “You, you... Soo Soo...”

Soo Soo swayed about as she moved until she was beside Chen Xiaolian. Suddenly, she knelt down before him and her short little arms embraced Chen Xiaolian’s waist. She leaned her face onto Chen Xiaolian’s body.

“Xiaolian oppa... except, with the exception of sister, I like you most...”

“You... Soo Soo?” Chen Xiaolian was speechless.

“Xiaolian oppa,” Soo Soo raised her face to gaze at Chen Xiaolian. However, an exhausted look appeared on her face. “So tired... using the skill... is too tiring.”

Her body went limp and Soo Soo fell onto Chen Xiaolian.

...

Somewhere within one kilometre from that area.

Within a hillside area, a figure was shuttling rapidly between the trees of the forest. Judging by the direction taken by this figure, it appeared that the figure was moving towards Chen Xiaolian’s location.

Suddenly, the figure appeared to have noticed something. The figure immediately stopped all movements and stood still!

The figure looked up and a pair of eyes were narrowed as they observed far into the distance. Those pair of eyes gradually revealed a look of intense surprise.

“This... this appears to be... S Class skill?”

Chapter 45: Split Personality

Chen Xiaolian moved to hold onto Soo Soo with both hands, but Queen Qiao had already crawled over. She embraced Soo Soo into her bosom. Chen Xiaolian could observe that Queen Qiao's face was not looking well, and her face was becoming increasingly dispirited.

After pondering upon it, he then produced two Mid Class Healing Type Beast Blood. He gave one to Queen Qiao. "Swallow it, it heals wounds."

Qiao Qiao accepted it; lowering her head, she inspected it and frowned. "This... is this also a special medicine that you people with super abilities use?"

After saying that, she swallowed it.

Chen Xiaolian proceeded to swallow his own Healing Beast Blood. He then leaned on the ground and smiled bitterly. "You little sister seems a little..."

Qiao Qiao forced herself to sit up with Soo Soo still within her embrace. She stared seriously at Chen Xiaolian. "Right now we should have the time for a proper conversation."

"..."

Chen Xiaolian pondered for a moment. "Very well. It would indeed be better if we are to clear up some matters."

"You first. How did you get to know my little sister? Also, what was that flaming phoenix that Soo Soo created earlier?"

Chen Xiaolian thought for a moment before he began narrating. "Just a few days ago, we were on the same plane..."

...

Tens of minutes later, Chen Xiaolian finished his story. Both of them remained silent.

Qiao Qiao did her best to assimilate Chen Xiaolian's words. After that, she raised her head to look at Chen Xiaolian. "So... what you are saying is

that there will be many powerful people ‘invading’ our world? Also, our world is simply an adventurous battlefield to them? And, Soo Soo and you were both accidentally sucked into it? That is how Soo Soo managed to obtain these strange abilities?”

“Yes. That is why I wanted to look for Soo Soo. We have been through a lot together on that island. In addition, those horrifying encounters will not stop there. I... I only wanted to find her. It has definitely nothing to do with whatever perverted matters that you were thinking of,” Chen Xiaolian forced a smile.

As he spoke, he glanced at Qiao Qiao. “However, Soo Soo does not recognize me. Logically speaking, she should have been similar to me; she should not have any problems with her memory.”

Qiao Qiao’s face twitched slightly.

Her expression turned heavy and she exhaled deeply. “Soo Soo... she is a little different from normal people.”

Qiao Qiao gently caressed Soo Soo’s cheeks. She lowered her head to look at Soo Soo who was in deep sleep and her eyes revealed traces of rare tenderness.

“This difference, what is it?”

“Her... within her body, there are two different personalities,” Qiao Qiao bit her lips. “Simply put, she has a... split personality.”

Personality... split?

Chen Xiaolian pondered about it.

“She is the daughter of my father’s friend,” Qiao Qiao lightly explained. “I was pretty much acquainted with her since the day she was born. Her father is my father’s best friend and also a business partner. Due to how busy her father is, he will bring Soo Soo whenever possible and ask us to help care for her.

We have been very intimate with one another since young and have always regarded each other as a close sister.

Originally, Soo Soo had been leading a normal life. However, her family met with an accident a few years back.

A huge fire broke out in her house and her parents were killed in the fire. Rescue workers were able to find Soo Soo in the house, thus allowing her to emerge alive from this calamity.

Soo Soo had to stay in the hospital's ICU for a few days before regaining consciousness. After regaining consciousness, we realized that she seemed to have lost a portion of her memory. She was incapable of recalling what had happened that night when the fire broke out.

Out of friendship, my father adopted Soo Soo and took her into our home from overseas. Ever since then though, I began to realize that Soo Soo would occasionally behave in an odd manner.

She is incapable to experiencing intense forms of agitation. Once she encounters danger, horror or shock, she will... exhibit a strange transformation.”

“When you say strange transformation, you mean...”

“There were a few cases: The first was when she just arrived. She has a timid personality, as always. That was very natural considering the fact that she was only a little girl. Back then, she was only around 5 years old. There was a time when she was in the kindergarten. There, some males bullied her where some would even say that she is an orphan without either parents, or that she is a foreigner who does not understand our language. Truth was, Soo Soo understands our language. She only cannot speak in our language properly.

Such types of bullying are not easy to discover, even for adults. As for Soo Soo, she never talked about it.

Then one day, the kindergarten called and informed us that Soo Soo had caused trouble.

On that day, we found out that she did something terrifying.”

At this point, Qiao Qiao's beautiful eyebrows entwined together and she continued slowly. “What happened back then started with the following:

During play time, a boy who had always bullied her took advantage of the teacher's inattention to put her in a small and dark room. He then threw the key away."

Soo Soo was locked inside for over an hour. By the time the teacher realized and got her out, her throat had turned hoarse from crying. The teacher who rescued her comforted her. She then fell asleep due to over exhaustion.

According to the teacher though, Soo Soo woke up, took advantage of the teacher's inattentiveness, and strolled out. She then found a pair of scissors from the teacher's office.

She found the bed of the boy who bullied her – during that time, all the children were taking their afternoon nap.

Soo Soo used the boy's socks and belt to tie him onto the bed before waking him up. Using the scissors, she then stabbed the boy's leg until blood flowed, twice. The boy was scared to the point of insanity and shouted out hysterically. That caused all the children in the room to wake up and the teachers to come over.

They saw Soo Soo holding onto a pair of scissors, moving it back and forth, as it hovered before the boy's neck. No matter how the teachers tried to persuade or intimidate her, she remained indifferent. She threatened the boy in front of the teachers. "If you dare to bully me again in the future, I will use this scissors to slice open your throat."

En, that was what she said back then.

Later on, the teachers told us that they have never seen a small child with such a terrifyingly cold attitude. The calmness she displayed back then was simply not that of a little child. That boy's legs were soaked with blood, but Soo Soo did not show any anxiety or fear – she is someone who would usually break into tears when facing the prospect of going for an injection!

What was most puzzling was what happened later. Soo Soo fainted, but when she woke up she had turned back into that soft and timid girl. In addition... she was oblivious to the fact that she had just used a pair of

scissors to threaten the little boy.

The parents of that boy had originally wanted to pursue this matter, but my father stepped in to have it settled. Ever since then, Soo Soo never attended kindergarten anymore and was home-schooled.

The second case happened two years ago when I had brought her out to play. When we were in the amusement park, I left for roughly two minutes to buy her cotton candy. But when I returned, I found that she had gone missing.

I became frantic and searched for her everywhere. I also reported it to the police. One hour later, the police found Soo Soo outside a toilet in the playground... and a wounded man.

The truth of what happened that day was that after I had left, someone who specializes in child trafficking set his sights on Soo Soo. Taking advantage of my absence, he forcibly abducted her.

However, when the police found them, the trafficker was lying on the ground. He groaned about in pain with Soo Soo by his side – she did not even cry. According to the police, they felt that there was something strange with her. Most little children would be scared senseless in such a situation, but Soo Soo showed no hint of panic or fear. In addition... there was blood on her hands. When she saw that the police had arrived, she calmly informed the police that the man on the ground had tried to abduct her.

After the hearing, we formed a rough estimate of what happened: Fearing that she would resist, the trafficker knocked her unconscious. Unexpectedly, Soo Soo had inexplicably woken up in the middle of it all.

Then... she did something that caused a chill to run down everyone's spine.

She snapped her own thumb, enduring that intense pain in order to break free from the restraints on her wrist.

She then removed two hairpins from her head. Gripping one tightly in each hand, she remained in the same place, not attempting to move or

run. When the trafficker returned, he went to check if she had regained consciousness. When that happened, Soo Soo suddenly used the iron needle of the hairpin to... stab the trafficker in both his eyes!

All these information was obtained when the police were interrogating the trafficker.

As for Soo Soo... she fell asleep. When she woke up, she could no longer recall anything. All she could remember was me leaving to buy cotton candy for her. As for what happened next, how she was abducted, how she freed herself, how she stabbed the trafficker's eyes... she could no longer recall any of them."

Chapter 46: I Am Xia Xiao Lei

Chen Xiaolian's heart was shocked!

This... what kind of child is this?

Just think about it for a moment... a roughly 7-year-old girl. She snapped her own thumb in order to free herself from the restraints and could even forcibly endure the pain. Next, she maintained a composed state of mind, choosing not to escape and instead continued to stay in her original position while waiting for the trafficker to return. She then took the opportunity to use her hairpin as a weapon to stab the trafficker in both his eyes...

This state of mind, this level of decisiveness, even a majority of adults may not be capable of such a feat!

"What happened in the kindergarten may be acceptable as a result of being shocked. However, there was no explanation for what happened to her after she was abducted by the trafficker in the amusement park," Qiao Qiao's voice fell. "We took her to a psychiatrist. For her sake, we went several times to the United States to find the best specialist in psychiatry. In the end, we discovered that... Soo Soo has a dual personality.

One of the personalities, her main personality that she was born with is the real Soo Soo. She is a naïve, simple-minded and a somewhat timid little girl.

Her other personality... is somewhat dark. An overly rational and dispassionate personality. That second personality has an inclination towards violence and is characterized by emotionless indifference. In addition, she possesses a very strong tendency to reject and attack others.

Ever since then, the situation became increasingly severe.

The frequency at which her second personality would appear began increasing. There were times where she would 'transform' after waking up even though she did not encounter anything terrifying.

Once her second personality surfaces, she would become unwilling to interact with the outside world. She would be unwilling to talk and refuse to have anyone approach her. She also became... somewhat cruel.

When her second personality emerges, she would reject the presence of others; neither the house nanny nor my father would be able to approach her. Thankfully, she is still able to recognize me as her big sister. I am the only one who can approach her when her second personality appears.

Thus, I became her inseparable protector.

This split personality symptom persisted for over a year. Because of that, we had searched for many specialists in psychiatry in order to have her treated. The conclusion that we obtained was that her parents' death had given her a great psychological trauma.

Whenever humans are subjected to a great calamity, they would become fearful and weak. In order to protect themselves, they will give birth to a ruthless, aggressive and strong type of personality. This personality is what they will use to defend themselves.

That is the general explanation for her situation.

The specialists had no real method to treat this split personality symptom. Medication could only serve in complementing other efforts. What is most important is the rehabilitation of her mind. She must be given care in life so that she would be able to enjoy the better facets of life and the intimate warmth of family. At the same time, she would be able to slowly overcome and let go of the repressive shadow in her heart...

We have always strived hard to make that happen.

That is why I am very, very protective of Soo Soo and would normally do my best to not let her encounter any harm or agitation – Chen Xiaolian, I am very sorry. When we first met, I had acted rudely towards you because I thought that you were a pervert who was trying to get close to Soo Soo and bring her harm. I hope you can understand my protective mind-set towards my little sister.

No matter what, I am very sorry and very thankful to all that you have

done for Soo Soo!”

“Err...” Chen Xiaolian kneaded his nose. “Then... Soo Soo’s current state...”

“Actually, her split personality problem had improved. At least... due to the effect of our warm treatment towards her, the frequency of second personality’s emergence has gradually decreased. Her character had also turned to be more cheerful, she was no longer so timid and fearful of her surroundings. We even encouraged her to have more contact with the outside world.

On the day that you met her on the plane, my father had brought her with him when he was travelling abroad. However, due to an unexpected business matter, he had to send her home.

Back then, father sent her up to the plane. As for me, I would be waiting for her at the airport – we had thought that nothing could possibly happen. Within the enclosed space of an airplane, no accidents should have happened.

Unexpectedly...”

Chen Xiaolian finally understood.

Why was it that Soo Soo could not recognize him after coming out of the instance dungeon.

Why was it that the GM would say that Soo Soo has a very interesting setting...

So that was what happened. The one who summoned out the blazing phoenix to help him defeat Newton back in the instance dungeon was Soo Soo’s second personality!

In addition... due to the naïve and timid nature of the main personality, she would faint whenever she encounters any dangerous or terrifying incidents. After that... all the memories regarding the terrifying incident would be handed over to her second personality.

As for the main personality, she would automatically forget everything

regarding the terrifying incident.

This means that due to the high amount of shock and fear within the instance dungeon, Soo Soo's main personality chucked all the memories of her in the island to her second personality. Within the main personality's memories, she had safely travelled on the plane without any incident.

That was why...

The second personality, that bloody loli was able to recognize him and recall everything that had happened in the island... even the incident where she had killed off Newton!

As for the main personality, she had, in her mental self-defence, forgotten all that had happened in the island.

This puzzle had finally been solved!

Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao looked at each other, their expressions were somewhat strained.

"Today, Soo Soo... killed two people," Qiao Qiao spoke with difficulty. "When she wakes up later, she will probably return to her main personality. She is after all only a 10-year-old child. In addition, she still does not know that she has a split personality problem. Her main personality does not know of the second personality's existence. In previous instances, whenever she transforms, I will protect her with care and not let her find anything abnormal. That is why... in order to not let her illness deteriorate, I want to ask that you..."

"Don't worry, I won't say anything," Chen Xiaolian quickly nodded his head. "I understand. For a 10-year-old little girl... the matter of her killing two people is not something that we can allow her to find out – even though those two people deserved to die, such a horrible matter is not something that a 10-year-old should have to bear."

"...Thank you, for everything. For the care and protection that you provided to her in the island and all that you have done so far," Qiao Qiao said in a solemn manner. "If I could, I would do everything I can to repay

you. However... my family have nothing except having more money than most... I believe that someone like you who have such miraculous abilities would not care about money. Thus..."

"Nope, who said I do not care about money?" Chen Xiaolian deliberately smiled. "I am a person who can be easily bought, just throw money at me! If you want to repay me, then you can just casually give me some tens of millions or hundreds of millions. See? I have already suffered from so many injuries. Just consider it as medical expenses."

Qiao Qiao looked straight at Chen Xiaolian. "You... really are interesting. You had just fought without a care for your own life and even talked about righteousness. Yet now, you are acting like a secular opportunist."

After that, she climbed up. Through the course of their conversation, the wounds on their bodies had already been healed. However, just as Qiao Qiao had wanted to climb up, her body suddenly turned soft. Her face changed. "Eh?"

Chen Xiaolian frowned. Seeing Qiao Qiao fall onto the ground, he reached out with his hand to support her. However, once he tried to move, he immediately noticed his body turning soft. "What is going on?"

He could feel that his entire body was still weak and numb, bereft of any strength! It was no different from before.

The wounds of his body... using the Healing Beast Blood, it had obviously been healed.

Could it be... the poison... was not cured?

Healing Beast Blood have no ability to treat poison?

...

Chen Xiaolian tried again a number of times... as expected!

Although the external wounds on his body had been healed, his strength remained weak. Despite having rested for a while, the amount of strength he has was only enough for him to move about slightly... in

addition, each movement would quickly exhaust his strength!

Clearly, the poison capable of eroding away physical strength remained within his body. It was also apparent that this poison is not something that the Healing Type Beast Blood could cure.

En... the Beast Blood could only restore blood.

For the poison, an antidote of sort is probably needed?

“Bloody Hell...”

Panic rose in Chen Xiaolian’s heart. He observed the surrounding wilderness and crawled forward. He searched the area that had been scorched by the flames and found his Cross-shaped Medallion Sword – it had already returned into the shape of a pendant.

However, he no longer has the strength to let it transform into a sword anymore. He could only grip it in his hands.

“This is bad...” Chen Xiaolian glanced at Qiao Qiao. “We are still in a poisoned state. I do not know how much longer this poison will persist... or will it cause more harm to our body.”

“You... don’t you have anything like an antidote? Just like the item you gave me earlier, or the syringe that gave me incredible strength?”

Chen Xiaolian remained silent as he smiled resentfully. “I really do not have...”

Damn it... if only he has an Exchange System! Perhaps he would be able to use points to exchange out the antidote.

Damned emasculated version of the Player System!

At that moment when they were both unable to do anything...

Chen Xiaolian suddenly caught sight of something on his radar interface.

A green dot was slowly moving towards them.

“En? Someone is coming! Player... or Awakened?”

...

Chen Xiaolian became nervous and clenched the pendant shaped sword. Even though he knew he could not summon out the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword, it could at least serve to comfort him.

The green dot came closer and its approaching speed gradually decreased. It appeared that the other party was showing some doubts?

“Who is it? Reveal yourself!”

Chen Xiaolian deliberately shouted out loudly.

From the northwest of the woods, a figure carefully emerged from the trees.

...

It was someone who appeared to be at most a 16-years-old teenage male... he was wearing dirty clothes. His face was covered with dust, which almost impedes the view of his face. As for his hair, it was neither long nor short and was unkempt. His eyes were dark with water like shine, seemingly somewhat clever. He walked out slowly with care and some feelings of fear and nervousness.

“Who are you?” Chen Xiaolian deliberately shouted out with a heavy voice. “Awakened? Or Player?”

After shouting, he purposely lifted up his hand to flash out the existence of the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword in his palm.

“Don’t... don’t attack,” The other person spoke out. His voice was a little hoarse and his pair of eyes stared at the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword in Chen Xiaolian’s hand. “Do not attack! I do not have any malicious intent! I am also an Awakened, an Awakened!”

“Awakened?” Chen Xiaolian looked at the boy who was at most 16-years-old. “You?”

“It is true!” The boy smiled shyly as he felt around his pockets and produced a short metal cylinder. “See, see this.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

Surprisingly, that was a light sabre given to newbies.

Back then, he had been very excited to have obtained the light sabre. It was only later on that he discovered that this newbie weapon's damage was too lacking.

“Newbie?” Chen Xiaolian curiously regarded this fellow.

“Eh... no,” This childlike teenage boy scratched his head and said in a rather embarrassed manner. “I have been through an instance dungeon before.”

“Then why did you come here?” Chen Xiaolian asked coldly. “You... are you together with the longhaired fellow?”

“No no no! I do not know any longhaired or shorthaired fellow,” The childlike boy quickly denied – from his expression, it seemed that he was afraid of Chen Xiaolian. “I... I happen to live near the mountains. When I was going out today, I sensed that there were Awakened ones fighting here. That, that is why I came over here, to look...”

Then, his eyes revealed a look of admiration and worship. “Th... that... I... I am called Xia Xiao Lei. I really do live nearby. My family is involved in herb picking. You... you... you must be the master who had used the S Class skill earlier, right?”

This time, it was Chen Xiaolian's turn to become shocked.

Newbie?

Live near the mountains?

Wait, wait...

What did he mean S Class skill?

Chen Xiaolian's mind suddenly clicked and he subconsciously turned to look at Soo Soo who was lying in Qiao Qiao's bosom.

That blazing phoenix... skill...

S Class?!

Xia Xiao Lei, Raw: ‘夏小雷’, pinyin: ‘xià xiǎo léi’. ‘夏’ means summer, ‘小’ means small, ‘雷’ means thunder.

Chapter 47: Carry Me To The Lofty Skies

Seeing Chen Xiaolian's stunned reaction of silence, Xia Xiaolei probably came to a misunderstanding and quickly said. "A few months ago, I accidentally entered the system and had to go through an instance dungeon.

But, I was too useless. The others all blame me for being too stupid and none of the Awakened teams were willing to accept me!

Big brother! You possess an S Class skill, you are the most powerful Awakened that I have ever met! I... I beg you... I beg you, please accept me! Allow me to join your team, please? I beg you! I can do anything, I can stomach any bitterness!"

"What did you just say? Accept you?" Chen Xiaolian swallowed his saliva.

"Yes!" Xia Xiaolei's face was one of distress. "I am not a picky person, I can do anything! Just accept me please! No one was willing to accept me into their team..."

While speaking, Xia Xiaolei's face seemed to be on the verge of crying. He stared intently at Chen Xiaolian. "If this goes on, I will be alone without anyone to care for me in the next instance dungeon, I... I fear that I will die."

"You mean... you want to be my little brother?" Chen Xiaolian gaped.

"That is right! I am willing!" Xia Xiaolei quickly took a few steps forward and bowed continuously towards Chen Xiaolian. "Great God! As someone who possesses an S Class skill, you are practically a Great God amongst Great Gods! Great God! Please accept me!"

Chen Xiaolian felt himself being mentally blown.

I... What kind of luck is this?

While casually going through the wilderness, I am able to bump into an unaffiliated Awakened?

In addition, he is a worshipful little rookie?

This... if this is a novel, that that would be the equivalent of having the main character's amazing aura!

"That... Xia Xiaolei, right? You want to join my team and be my underling, right? Er... do you have any other request?"

"None! None in general! I can work! I can do both dirty and tiresome work! I only ask that you carry me with you to the lofty skies!"

Chen Xiaolian's eyes rolled up.

Carry you to the lofty skies?

Sky your sister!

However...

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath before realizing another problem.

Presently, both he and Qiao Qiao have been poisoned. If they were to encounter any danger, not only would they be unable to resist, they would not even have the ability to protect themselves.

This Xia Xiaolei has the appearance of someone who could not harm any human or even animals.

However... after having gone through an instance dungeon, in addition to his meeting with the longhaired man and the trench coat wearing middle-aged man, Chen Xiaolian came to realize a cruel truth: Players may not necessarily be the scariest and Awakened ones may not necessarily be the virtuous Justice League!

Knowing one's appearance does not equate to knowing one's heart!

The reason Xia Xiaolei was being so respectful towards him was because of... en, the S Class skill.

However, if Xia Xiaolei were to realize that Chen Xiaolian does not have any S Class skill and that he was currently in a weakened state due to poison, who knows just what kind of malicious intent Xia Xiaolei might have?

Reality aside, even in online games, the act of killing between strangers in order to acquire loot is a common thing.

An example would be the two wicked Awakened ones that he had just met. As such, Chen Xiaolian could not take things for granted.

Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao's gaze met. They both nodded their heads in silence as they came to an understanding.

"Whether I accept you or not will have to be discussed later. First, I must test you."

"Very well! Great God, please test me! Oh, right... how should I address you?"

"I am called Xiao..." Chen Xiaolian suddenly had a thought and he did not reveal his true name. He said. "My friends all call me Little Wu."

"Very well, then should I address you as Brother Wu, or Boss Wu, or Great God?"

"... just call me Brother Wu," Chen Xiaolian forced a smile. "The number of people who calls me Boss Wu or Great God is high enough." He then added inwardly: Most of them have nothing good to say to me anyways. They are usually cursing me for not updating my chapters or saying that I have a small penis...

Having said that, Chen Xiaolian pointed towards Han Bi who was lying on the ground not far away. "That is my team member. He had fainted, go help bring him over."

"All right!"

Xia Xiaolei was overjoyed and he went over to carry Han Bi over. Checking carefully, he said. "Brother Wu, this team member of yours seemed to have been drugged."

Chen Xiaolian thought about it: Since Han Bi had yet to awaken; perhaps what this Xia Xiaolei said was true. After all, that trench coat wearing middle-aged man specializes in poison.

"Do you have points? Use your points to exchange out antidotes from

the Exchange System for me,” Chen Xiaolian said lightly.

“Err...” Xia Xiaolei’s face seemed on the verge of tears. “There are antidotes in the Exchange System, but... it is not that I am stingy, Brother Wu. But the problem is that, I do not have any points.”

“No points?” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Didn’t you participate in an instance dungeon before?”

Xia Xiaolei’s expression turned strange. “I am not lying to you; I really do not have any points.”

Seemingly fearful of the possibility that Chen Xiaolian will not trust him, Xia Xiaolei quickly added. “Back when I had entered the instance dungeon, I was confused. I remembered going to an old town to sell herbs. I inexplicably encountered a strange incident where many people were killing one another. I do not know how it happened, but things began to show up before my eyes. It was like those things that I had normally seen in Internet cafes when playing online games.

I, I was truly terrified. Those people were killing one another, some claiming to be Players and some claiming to be Awakened ones. They all have their own Guilds.

Later on, I learnt that someone like me should be one of those called Awakened ones.

I had wanted to join them, but... I had entered a team of Awakened ones only to be kicked out on the second day. Additionally, none of the other teams of Awakened ones were willing to accept me.”

“Why?” Chen Xiaolian became curious. “Why was no one willing to accept you?”

Xia Xiaolei fidgeted a little. “That... the first reason is because I am a timid person, I dare not fight. The second reason... is because... I...”

As he spoke, he seemingly made up his mind. He gritted his teeth and continued. “I have blood phobia. I will faint if I see blood. In battles, I am of no help at all, that is why...”

“That explains it,” Chen Xiaolian sighed.

A fellow who will pass out if he sees blood is simply unsuited to the cruelty of the instance dungeon that was filled with hidden dangers everywhere – he would simply become a burden.

“Then, how did you survive?”

“I...” Xia Xiaolei became embarrassed. “The other Awakened ones were unwilling to accept me while the Players would kill any Awakened ones that they meet. In addition... there were many terrifying monsters in that instance dungeon. Seeing no other alternative, I simply found a place where I hid and did nothing. After hiding for a while, I fell asleep. When I woke up, the instance dungeon had finished... I do not know what the end result was, who won, who lost. In any case... in any case... I saw the system prompt stating that the instance dungeon was over.”

Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded.

That worked?

Holy mother of shit!

In the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon, this brother could be said to have lost 8 out of 9 lives! If one were to measure how much blood I lost, it would be in CCs argh!

This kid, he actually found a place to hide and do nothing then slept through it all and survived the instance dungeon without even knowing anything?

His luck is simply a defiance of the Heavens!

However, the thing that would cause Chen Xiaolian to collapse was that Xia Xiaolei was not finished...

“The system also prompted me and stated that the instance dungeon is a survival type instance. The Players and Awakened ones killed each other and also fought against the monsters within the instance dungeon. In short... it seemed that none of them managed to survive until the required amount of time. I was the only one with the longest amount of survival

duration. So, the system reward...”

“The system reward was given to you?!”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyeballs nearly fell off his sockets.

His stare was fixed upon this fellow with Heaven defying luck...

“That...” Chen Xiaolian suddenly found his confidence waning as he whispered. “Say... are you by chance the main character here?”

...

Chen Xiaolian had to admit.

He had originally thought that his luck was so good it was practically on the brink of bursting out. Within the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon, he had fallen into dire straits quite a number of times. However, he would unexpectedly manage to escape with his life intact. In addition, he even managed to get a generous loot in the end.

If this world was a novel, Chen Xiaolian felt that he was certainly qualified to be the bearer of the main character’s aura.

But the problem was...

He had just met another newbie like him... this newbie actually did nothing. He snored his way through his sleep, not encountering any surprise or danger and finally completed the instance dungeon. He even got the instance dungeon’s reward?

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt that the good fortune from calamity that he had within the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon were but child’s play.

“What is your instance dungeon reward?” Chen Xiaolian did his best to suppress his emotions: grudge, jealousy and hatred.

“Err...” Xia Xiaolei pondered about it. “It is Enhanced Extrasensory Perception. It can be used permanently on the Personal System’s Radar. The original radius of detection for the radar is within 1 km. After binding the radar with the Enhanced Extrasensory Perception, the effective radius of detection is increased by tenfold.”

“In other words, the area that your radar covers is within a 10 km radius?” Chen Xiaolian could not help but sigh – that could encompass a small city!

During any battles, the most important part was to understand the enemy and find opportunities, by figuring out the geography of the area and seizing onto traces of the enemy... this ability that would allow one to cover a radius of 10 km with one's radar simply had too many benefits!

“It is not just that,” Xia Xiaolei whispered. “Extrasensory Perception is not simply the ability to see the presence of others. It can also detect skills.”

“What do you mean?”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked!

To detect other people's skill, the information obtained would be amazing!

Back in the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon, the veteran Players, Sara and Damon were able to check out the attributes of others. However, they were unable to identify what skills others have!

In other words, skill was the most powerful weapon that any Player of Awakened could possess!

However... Xia Xiaolei continued...

“Do not misunderstand me, I am unable to view what kind of skills others have. All I can do is observe the radar. If someone uses a skill when engaged in a battle, I will be able to sense it. I will know that someone is using a skill... additionally, the radar will indicate the level of the skill used. I am however, incapable of knowing what abilities that skill could have.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head, his face showing a little relief.

In other words, Xia Xiaolei could observe the traces of any skills used. Additionally, the system will help him identify the level of the skill.

However, other relevant information regarding the skill would remain

undisclosed.

That was more like it. Otherwise, this skill of Xia Xiaolei would be an excessive defiance of Heaven.

Chapter 48: Humanoid Discount Card

Chen Xiaolian finally let go of his suspicions towards this person called Xia Xiaolei.

It had to be said, this kid was a real simpleton and somewhat honest. A good way of putting it would be to say that he was an honest person. A more straightforward way of putting it would be to say that he was a stupid person.

If Chen Xiaolian was in his shoes and he sensed that there were Awakened ones engaged in a battle, he would not have taken such a risk to come over – especially when considering the fact that his strength was still at the level of a rookie.

Instead, this fellow actually came over happily in order to find a Great God to carry him to the lofty skies?

At any rate... all Chen Xiaolian had to say was that this fellow was of the idiotically adorable type!

Besides, Chen Xiaolian felt no small amount of goodwill towards this Xia Xiaolei fellow.

He was a really warm-hearted person.

Despite being told by Chen Xiaolian that he was injured and weak, Xia Xiaolei did not have any malicious thoughts. Seeing there were 4 person on Chen Xiaolian's side, he suggested that Chen Xiaolian continued staying there for a moment while he went looking for a means of transportation.

After over an hour, Chen Xiaolian saw a farm vehicle chugging out black smoke as it moved towards them from the plains. In the driver's seat, Xia Xiaolei was happily waving at them happily.

This boy then took the initiative to help carry Han Bi into the vehicle. He also helped to support Qiao Qiao who was having mobility problems and the unconscious Soo Soo up the vehicle.

When he saw that Chen Xiaolian was also having problems moving, he

broke a tree branch for Chen Xiaolian to serve as a walking stick.

This fellow did not bear any ill intent towards them at all. This caused Chen Xiaolian to feel shameful of himself for his suspicious mind-set earlier.

After that... on their way, Chen Xiaolian realized that this fellow has a tendency to chat incessantly.

He was an orphan. He grew up following his master who was an old Chinese physician and would come harvest herbs in the mountains all year round.

According to him, the reason he was named Xia Xiaolei was because he was born in summer (xià) when thunders (léi) were still rumbling. Thus, his master casually picked that name for him.

According to him, his master liked to drink and was an old drunkard. From a very young age, Xia Xiaolei had started running amok around the mountains. All the herbs that he picked up would be exchanged for money where most of it would be given to his master to buy alcohol.

However, his master died a year ago due to excessive drinking which resulted in damaged livers.

As for how he entered the system, Xia Xiaolei showed no reservation as he spoke about it.

A few months ago, he had occasionally chosen to go to a very famous old town to peddle the herbs that he had picked up from the mountains.

That highly famed old town was the capital of several dynasties throughout history and has many fabled ancient architectural monuments.

In particular, there was a very famous mountain range there said to house the tombs of many ancient emperors.

According to Xia Xiaolei, after he went to peddle his herbs in the old town, he followed a group of people into the mountains to pick some more herbs. In the end, he fell sick and lost consciousness. When he woke

up, he found that he had acquired a metallic sphere and thus entered the system.

After hearing that part, Chen Xiaolian was able to finally confirm that Xia Xiaolei must have become an Awakened one.

Moreover, the instance dungeon that Xia Xiaolei encountered piqued Chen Xiaolian's interest – the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon that he had participated in was a new instance dungeon, consisting purely of Players. There were no Awakened Guild members within that instance, only the newly Awakened Han Bi.

However, the instance dungeon that Xia Xiaolei participated in... based on his description, it appeared to be one where Player Guilds and Awakened Guilds chaotically battled against one another!

In other words, with the exception of Xia Xiaolei who was a newly Awakened one, there were other veteran Awakened ones who participated inside...

One could assume that the Players gained information regarding the instance dungeon as they played the game... However, how would the veteran Awakened ones and the Guilds prepare themselves for an instance dungeon?

Could it be... GM secretly spread the information to them?

Unfortunately, this question was one that Xia Xiaolei was unable to answer. He was after all, a newbie Awakened. Not to mention, he had never even met the GM before.

This fellow did not put himself on guard at all. He showed no reservation as he poured out everything regarding his situation.

It had to be said, Xia Xiaolei's way of conduct moved Chen Xiaolian – In this current day and age, such a kind of people had gone extinct in the city.

Using Xia Xiaolei's farming vehicle, they arrived at his residence. It was a village situated at the foot of a mountain.

Xia Xiaolei's house was a tile-roofed house. According to him, there were only a few old people left in this village who keeps watch over the place. The younger generations have all left to make a living away from home.

As they were in Xia Xiaolei's house, he brought out some food to serve the guests and even brought out his own home brewed herbal wine.

After drinking two cups of wine, Chen Xiaolian openly asked Xia Xiaolei for his help.

"Can you help me exchange antidote out from the Exchange System?" Chen Xiaolian looked at Xia Xiaolei and did his best to project a tone of sincerity. "I can send you the points so that you can exchange it out. Then, you can give me the antidote."

"Eh?" Xia Xiaolei was stunned. "You... cannot exchange it yourself?"

Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile. "Due to some special reason, I am currently unable to exchange... en, I am sorry but I cannot tell you the specifics. However, I can give you double the amount of points."

"No, there is no need," Xia Xiaolei waved his hands. "There is no need for you to be so modest. This is just a small matter. Wait a little, let me take a look at the Exchange System."

Xia Xiaolei became silent for a moment as he searched through the Exchange System. After that, he said to Chen Xiaolian. "There is an all curing antidote, divided into three types: Beginner Class, Mid Class and High Class. However, the difference in price is relatively large. Beginner Class requires 30 points, Mid Class requires 150 points, High Class requires... 500 points."

Chen Xiaolian considered for a moment. The poison that he and Qiao Qiao were suffering from was not the fatal type. Surely, the Beginner Class alone would suffice. In addition... the Mid Class Antidote was too expensive. He only has a total of 456 points, enough only for three of the Mid Class Antidotes.

"Help me exchange out 5 Beginner Class Antidotes," Chen Xiaolian

made his decision. In addition to the current necessity for the antidotes, he decided it would be best for him to procure more while he was at it. After all, he might end up meeting another enemy who uses poison. It would be best to make preparations for it.

Then, something surprising happened.

5 Beginner Class Antidotes. Chen Xiaolian utilized the Gift feature to give Xia Xiaolei 150 points. However, after Xia Xiaolei made his purchase, Chen Xiaolian found through the system prompt that Xia Xiaolei had gifted to him 5 Beginner Class All Curing Antidote... and 30 points!

“What does these 30 points mean?”

Xia Xiaolei’s face blushed a little. “Brother Wu, this is my Exclusive Skill.”

“What?”

“After I became a newbie, the personal skill I selected is ‘Haggling’. This skill is too humiliating for me to even talk about. It cannot be used to fight or kill... it can only be used to get discounts when exchanging for items through the Exchange System. My ‘Haggling’ skill is only at the beginner level, so getting a 20% discount during purchase is the only thing it can do. Even though the 5 antidotes cost a total of 150 points, it becomes 120 points after the discount. So, I returned you the 30 points.

If this skill is upgraded in the future, perhaps it could get a higher amount of discount. Sigh... at any rate, this skill is just too humiliating. It is of no help at all in a fight... I am truly a piece of trash.”

Xia Xiaolei’s face was as red as a tomato. However... Chen Xiaolian was utterly shocked!

Trash?!

Are you kidding me?

This is simply the best skill ever!

The Exchange System is undoubtedly the core component of this whole system! The exchange points are something that all Players and

Awakened ones could only acquire by taking a huge risk: participating in instance dungeons!

A beginner level skill that gives 20% discount?

Are you kidding me?

That is simply a Godly skill!

Just think about it. For any teams, a large number of medical supplies and equipment had to be accumulated and prepared before entering an instance dungeon!

The cost for these supplies would be absolutely massive!

This Xia Xiaolei is quite simply a humanoid discount card!

Although his skill may be of no use in the frontlines, the presence of such a member in any team would allow that team to greatly increase their comprehensive strength!

If a team were to have such a humanoid discount card in their ranks... every time they needed to do battle in the instance dungeon, they would be able to save up a huge number of points. A large number of points can be saved when purchasing the consumption type of medicines and materials! Those points can then be used to purchase even more weapons and equipment of a higher quality...

Who would dare call this skill trash?

Moreover... the Exchange System must certainly have some of those highly expensive, high levelled items or others of the like!

When dealing with such high prices, the ability to gain a 20% discount for each purchase.... Just how many points can be saved?!

Also... this skill can still be upgraded! After the upgrade, the amount of discount would be even higher!

This skill cannot be used to fight?

What nonsense! With this skill, there would be no need to fight!

A Team Leader that would send a person with such a kind of skill to the

front lines to fight must have a problem with his brain!

They must mobilize all their powers to protect this valuable team member!

Chen Xiaolian's eyes turned red yet again. "Admit it! You... there is a main character's brilliant aura above your head!"

Xia Xiaolei just gave a simple laugh.

...

Chen Xiaolian also tried asking Xia Xiaolei some other questions.

The thing that Chen Xiaolian was most concerned about... involves skill classifications!

The S Class that Xia Xiaolei mentioned earlier had Chen Xiaolian very concerned.

Skill classification? He did not know anything about this at all – the damned GM did not even bother explaining it to him. As for his own system, it was clearly missing some parts.

"You do not know about skill classes?" Xia Xiaolei stared with wide-open eyes at Chen Xiaolian.

However, Xia Xiaolei was indeed a simple-minded person. Despite Chen Xiaolian not giving too much of an explanation, he had answered Chen Xiaolian's questions.

"The specifics for the skill classifications are something that I too do not know of in detail. The criteria set by the system are not displayed out. Generally speaking, though, they are separated from E Class to S Class.

However, a skill's class is not set in stone as those skills can grow. In other words, some skills may have a lower class in the beginning. However, as the skill levels up, the skill's class could be enhanced.

But, the standard specifics are not displayed out in the system. I guess this part is a hidden part of the system.

However, I did manage to hear something regarding this matter from an

elder member of the Awakened Guild that took me in during my first day. There is a widely accepted thought amongst the Awakened ones and Players: Although the specifics and standard of the skill classification is unclear, one thing has been proven true. That is... it is possible to identify certain properties from the name of the skills.”

“Name? Properties?” Chen Xiaolian curiously asked.

Xia Xiaolei nodded his head and answered honestly. “According to that elder, fighting type skills that has the word ‘God’ is without a doubt an S Class skill.

This may be due to the preference and tendency of the Development Team. At any rate, if the name of the skill has words like ‘God’, ‘Heaven’, ‘Emperor’ or ‘Devil’, they are basically S Class skills. Skills that possess names that are overbearingly domineering must certainly be a very powerful godlike skill. It could only be S Class.

However... each newbie would only have one chance to select their skill. Each would be assigned three random skills where they must choose one. However, most people would not have the opportunity to select a skill with the word ‘God’ or the others that I mentioned.

These S Class skills are exceedingly rare. It is said that amongst the Players and Awakened ones that possess these S Class skills, anyone of them would be a powerful character with great fame.”

Hearing those words, Chen Xiaolian lost his composure!

“You... are you certain? As long as there is the word ‘God’ in it, that skill must certainly be S Class?”

“I am certain.”

“Are you certain... that most people would not be able to select a skill with the word ‘God’?”

“Of course they would not be able to... if the word ‘God’ is so prevalent, then would S Class still be S Class?”

Chen Xiaolian exhaled with great difficulty, his heart pounding in a

frenzy!

He could clearly recall that when he was selecting his Exclusive Skill, the three choices for him were...

Fire God's Howl, Darkness Descent, Goddess of Dawn... he was to choose one of these three!

Damn it... and they say skills with the name 'God' in it are exceptionally rare, of the S Class...

When this brother was making his selection, two out of three options have the word 'God' in it!

He needed to choose one out of the three, but two of them turned out to be S Class?

This brother's main character aura is also a very radiant one!

But...

Chen Xiaolian suddenly frowned...

That son of a bitch Goddess of Dawn's Overwhelming Sunlight Purification is considered S Class?

It is the Great Art of Demonic Dissolution! Each time I use it, I will become a crippled waste!

S Class my ass!

...

Chen Xiaolian suddenly thought of something. He turned to Xia Xiaolei and asked. "Skills... how does one go about upgrading it?"

"By using points to purchase materials from the Exchange System," Xia Xiaolei gave Chen Xiaolian a puzzled look. "The materials necessary to upgrade the various different skills can be purchased from the Exchange System. However, the materials required for upgrade would differ depending on the level of the skill. For a higher levelled skill, the amount of materials needed to upgrade the skill will be either higher in quantity or higher in price. In conclusion, it is not easy."

Exchange System?

Chen Xiaolian nearly puked out blood.

This brother casually got two S Class skills to pick from during the selection process! To be given a skill with such a great property, only to not have the Exchange System required to upgrade it!

What kind of a sick joke is this?

“Brother Wu... are you all right? You do not seem to be all right,” Xia Xiaolei saw that Chen Xiaolian’s face was twitching.

“Leave me alone, I need serenity,” Chen Xiaolian’s facial expression was a confusing contortion of laughter and grief. “And do not ask me who Serenity is.”

Chapter 49: Selection and Extermination

Xia Xiaolei left Chen Xiaolian alone in the room. He went out to find Qiao Qiao standing in the yard outside.

Xia Xiaolei turned somewhat stiff. This simple-minded youngster seemingly has no clue on how to talk to someone of the opposing gender. He could only remain speechless.

Qiao Qiao though treated him with friendliness. She lightly patted Xia Xiaolei on his shoulders. "It is all right. He will be fine... the fact that he could still joke around meant that he is fine. I will go talk with him while you go about with your matters. Thank you very much for today."

After Xia Xiaolei had left, Qiao Qiao inhaled deeply and walked into the room with a serious face.

Seeing Chen Xiaolian sitting inside with a blank look on his face, Qiao Qiao went over to sit before him.

"There is something that we need to discuss."

"En?" Chen Xiaolian waved his hand. "Wait."

He retrieved one Beginner Class All Curing Antidote and handed it to Qiao Qiao. "Take it. It could potentially get rid of the poison that is weakening our body."

Qiao Qiao nodded and swallowed it. She then looked at Chen Xiaolian. "Regarding the system that you have been talking about, and those instance dungeon, Players, Awakened ones..." Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth. "I want to join in!"

"What?" Chen Xiaolian stared incredulously.

"Soo Soo has already been sucked into it. That is why I want to join. I must be able to protect her from harm at all times," Qiao Qiao spoke with a very firm tone.

"This..." Chen Xiaolian sighed. "This matter is not as easy as you think. Moreover... I fear that you will regret it in the future. Besides, I... I fear I

will not be able to help you.”

“Don’t lie to me,” Qiao Qiao’s expression remained calm. “I will accept your good intentions. However... before we got up Xia Xiaolei’s truck, I saw you secretly searching the ground for a while. Later, I saw you picking up something from the ground; it looked like a metal sphere, right?”

Chen Xiaolian became surprised. “You saw it!”

Pa!

Without waiting for Chen Xiaolian to finish, Qiao Qiao suddenly slapped down on the table.

Surprisingly, within her palm was a metallic sphere!

“The other one is here with me. It probably rolled over to my feet by accident. I then picked it up,” Qiao Qiao’s voice remained calm as she stared at Chen Xiaolian in the eye. “My woman’s intuition tells me that this metal sphere has a deep connection with your identities as Awakened ones or Players.”

A woman’s intuition?

Oy! Shouldn’t you be a tomboy?

...

“Truth be told, my involvement would be beneficial towards you,” Qiao Qiao spoke in a composed manner. “I have a healthy body and am also proficient in fighting skills. After using the Genetic Enhancement Serum, my melee combat abilities are already superior to yours – even though your strength and speed is good, you know nothing at all about fighting skills. Back when you were fighting the longhaired man in the train, your movements were full of weaknesses. You were simply depending on your body to tough it out, without using any skill to back it up.

If I am to join in, then based on our friendship where we endure thick and thin together, we would become dependable allies and mutually support one another.

In addition, there is also Soo Soo. No matter what, I have to join in. As her big sister, I cannot simply watch and do nothing as Soo Soo get sucked into this matter alone!

That is why... Chen Xiaolian, I ask of you, please help me!"

Chen Xiaolian. "..."

"I will never give up. So... even if you are to refuse, I will still continue to badger you. I am sorry. However, this matter is something that I absolutely cannot give up on."

Chen Xiaolian was left tongue-tied. He looked into Qiao Qiao's eyes and slowly nodded his head. "... all right."

Qiao Qiao gave a sigh of relief, her eyes showing traces of joy. "Thank you, Chen Xiaolian."

She then picked up the metallic sphere. "How do I use this item?"

"It seems you can use your blood on it. At any rate, that was how I used it."

True to her name of Queen Qiao, she resolutely extended her index finger and bit down on it with force. Her blood then dripped down onto the surface of the metallic sphere.

Chen Xiaolian anxiously observed Qiao Qiao. He wanted to personally watch the activation process of the metallic sphere.

Upon the surface of the metallic sphere, the blood began to seep into it little by little!

The metallic sphere then seemingly transformed into liquid metal and dissolved at a rapid pace onto the table surface...

It was as though there was some type of force causing it to evaporate rapidly! Next... it transformed into a sphere of light!

This brilliant light immediately enveloped Qiao Qiao. As for Chen Xiaolian, the intensity of the light forced him to subconsciously close his eyes...

It was followed by a “peng” sound. When he opened his eyes, the light had disappeared and Qiao Qiao was lying unconscious upon the ground.

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

...

They spent the night at Xia Xiaolei’s house.

Chen Xiaolian had already given himself and Han Bi the antidote.

When dawn arrived, Han Bi finally woke up.

After waking up, Han Bi saw Chen Xiaolian beside him and his thick eyebrows suddenly jumped. He shouted loudly. “Xiaolian! You are not dead? We are not dead? Eh? Where is Amon? Did we manage to finish him off? I remember killing you in the end.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled – his smile was one of happiness and sincerity.

From those words, he could tell that the ‘Han Bi’ he knew had returned!

Han Bi had regained his memories!

Chen Xiaolian went forward and fiercely pounded him in the chest with his fist, then he smiled. “Do not forget, you owe me a slash! Back then, you personally killed me.”

Han Bi’s face quickly turned distressful and he whispered. “I am sorry... even though you are the one who told me to do it, I... I still feel sorry. When I struck you, my eyes were filled with tears.”

“Enough about that, I was just joking,” Chen Xiaolian laughed out. “Everything is fine now, I am still alive and the instance dungeon has also been completed. Since we are still alive, isn’t everything fine? Oh, right... do you still have your recent memories? From the time in the train?”

“The train?”

Han Bi’s eyes seemed lost for a moment before jumping up. “Ah! I remember! I remember everything now! Eh? It seems those people had abducted me? Did you save me?”

“It is a long story,” Chen Xiaolian frowned and patted Han Bi’s

shoulders. “Regardless, it is good to have you back. Sigh... it feels difficult to hold on alone. I am in need of a partner that I can trust.”

“A cooperation!” Han Bi looked at Chen Xiaolian. With a moved expression, he held out his hand.

Chen Xiaolian laughed out. He ignored Han Bi’s hand and directly went in for a hug. The two young men held each other and patted each other in the back.

“Hey... to think I would see such a passionate scene so early in the morning...”

Big Miss Qiao’s sound came from the door, her words brought with it a special tone of a Queen’s delicate pride. “Do you need me to leave for a moment to let you have some time to get warm?”

The two youngsters looked at each other and immediately jumped away from each other. “Pei! What nonsense! This is the feeling of pure brotherhood!”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao who was standing at the door.

Big Miss Qiao did not appear to have changed much, however... something indistinct and profound seemed to be hiding behind her eyes.

“Success?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

“En,” Qiao Qiao nodded her head. “However... some features seemed to be locked.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Because you are the same as me. You are not a host body; you are simply using someone else’s account to login. That is why we cannot access many of the features. However...”

He pulled Han Bi over. “Let me introduce, this is the one and only partner I met in the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon, Han Bi. He is a very good fellow. He is an Awakened one, so he is somewhat different from us and Soo Soo. However, his system is the complete version. So... if we ever need to purchase anything from the Exchange System, we can get his help.”

Qiao Qiao and Han Bi glanced at each other. Since they did not know each other, the situation was a little awkward. However, Han Bi became excited. He threw several deep glances at Big Miss Qiao and could not help himself as he blurted out. "Xiaolian... Fatty Wu! Big Wu! This must be your prearranged wife-to-be, right?"

"Wife-to-be your sister!" Chen Xiaolian's face changed as he quickly turned to look at Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao did not become angry. She only gave Han Bi a look before turning to Chen Xiaolian. "Earlier, I had checked up on my little sister. She had woken up, but... as you have already known, she cannot remember anything. She did not remember being abducted from the train."

Xiaolian, Han Bi, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo. The four of them were formally gathered together for the first time.

However, Soo Soo was currently in her main personality form and had forgotten all those unhappy memories. Thus, she treated Chen Xiaolian and Han Bi as strangers.

Chen Xiaolian explained her circumstance to Han Bi and the both of them were beset by mixed feelings.

In the afternoon, the four of them decided to leave. This decision made Xia Xiaolei somewhat disappointed.

"Brother Wu... Great God! Can you really not bring me with you? Just please let me follow you!"

Chen Xiaolian looked at the simple-minded youngster and hesitated for a moment. "Xiaolei, I am going to tell you the truth. We are actually not masters. We are just like you; we are newbies who have only experienced one instance dungeon. So, I am not a Great God."

"But, you have the S Class skill."

Chen Xiaolian had wanted to explain that the S Class skill that he saw was not released by him. However, after thinking about it... his own Goddess of Dawn should also be of the S Class. He could only reluctantly

accept that fact.

“Instance dungeon is not something that is enjoyable,” Chen Xiaolian gave a strained smile. “Truth be told, I kind of envy you. You can stay in this mountain village and protect your clear and relaxed mind. If I am you, and if I have the choice, I would not think of risking my life to enter any instance dungeons. I would rather live here and keep myself away from conflicts. Xiaolei... listen to my advice, don’t think about things like carrying you to what lofty skies... When you are older, you will understand. The ability to live a stable life is the happiest thing for us humans.”

“Bu... but...”

“No buts,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “If you keep yourself hidden in this village, I doubt the other Players or Awakened ones could find you. If... If something happens though, you can call me up at any time. I have already written down my mobile number on a piece of paper and left it on the topside of the bed. If you need any help, just give me a call.”

“En, I have also left my mobile number on the table,” Qiao Qiao looked at Xia Xiaolei and said in a very sincere tone. “You are the most generous and upright fellow that I have ever met, Xia Xiaolei. Stay here and continue living a good life.”

Xia Xiaolei’s eyes showed a little disappointment. He then let out a sigh. “Very well... even though I do not understand what you said, it sounded rather reasonable.”

The four of them said their goodbyes to Xia Xiaolei and left – Chen Xiaolian felt somewhat tempted to bring this humanoid discount card to his side... However, he was a good-hearted youth.

How could he bear to pull such a simple-minded fellow into a world filled with struggles and deaths?

It would be better to let him stay hidden and live a quiet life in this mountain village.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian did not know... this fellow known as Xia

Xiaolei would form a great bond with him in the future...

...

“Where are we going now?”

A few hours later, the four of them were standing upon a street near a county town.

Qiao Qiao looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“We... we will go to Shaanxi,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Roddy is still on the train. After the entire huge ruckus that we have caused on the train, there is no telling what will happen to Roddy. Hopefully, he won’t be considered as a monster or accomplice with monsters and be arrested.”

That was indeed a very vexing problem.

“En, then let us go to Shaanxi,” Qiao Qiao was after all a rich girl with an independent character. She immediately made the plans. “First, we will find a place to buy mobile phones. All our phones have been broken. Therefore, we should first buy new mobile phones. Just put our cards in so that Roddy can contact us.”

At that moment, Han Bi’s face suddenly changed. He frowned and uttered in a low tone. “Eh?”

“What is wrong?” Chen Xiaolian looked at Han Bi. Qiao Qiao also casted a puzzled look at him.

“You all... you did not receive it?”

“Receive what?”

“It seems I am the only one to receive it?” Han Bi’s face turned uglier. “I received an information prompt from the system.”

“Information prompt?”

“Yes,” Han Bi’s face turned grim. “The prompt is as follows: Congratulations on being selected for the instance dungeon numbered V587. Please arrive at the designated area within 48 hours. The storyline, quest and background of the instance dungeon will be issued through the

system. Please make sure to check at all times. If you cannot enter the instance dungeon before it opens, you will be forcibly exterminated by the system!”

After finishing his sentence, Han Bi cursed out viciously. “{F*ck}!”

Chapter 50: Do Not Panic!

Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao were both rendered speechless.

Neither of them received that information prompt.

Han Bi was the only one to receive it!

“This... isn’t this just shitting on people?” Qiao Qiao could not help as she cursed out loudly. “Han Bi have to enter alone? That means that the two of us cannot enter? Are they forcing him to go fight alone?”

Han Bi’s expression had turned horrible – he was well aware of his own strength, he was merely a newbie Awakened.

If the difficulty level of the instance dungeon was too high, then in addition to the fact that his companions were absent, his probability of death would be very high.

Han Bi forced himself to smile and slowly said. “Perhaps... it is not so bad. After all, even if I were to die... I can still be revived. Chen Xiaolian, back when we were on the road, you mentioned that you met the GM. Didn’t he say that when an Awakened dies, it would not be a real death? They will be refreshed. I will return to life as an ordinary human and forget all these terrifying memories as I go on with my life... That does not sound too bad.”

Despite that, Qiao Qiao and Chen Xiaolian felt a bad taste in their mouths.

This was especially true for Chen Xiaolian.

After having to go through so many obstacles, fighting to the death with two veteran Awakened ones to save Han Bi...

Only to have to lose this friend and comrade?

In addition...

“You can say that... but we cannot be certain. If you were to die in the instance dungeon, would you really be revived and refreshed and become an ordinary person. Also...” Chen Xiaolian lowered his voice. “Should the

system revives you after your death and refresh you, would that still be the real you?

We are unable to be certain about all these.”

Han Bi and Qiao Qiao were unable to say anything.

“Do not panic!” Chen Xiaolian’s words were infused with a certain force.

He slowly took a deep breath and massaged his temple. He spoke with a calm and confident voice. “Right now, we need to calm down. Then, we will carefully analyse the message brought by the system prompt.”

“If he doesn’t go, he will be exterminated! What else is there to analyse?” Qiao Qiao became anxious. After being together for the past two days, Chen Xiaolian had somewhat gotten used to Qiao Qiao’s externally glacial and internally fiery temperament. This girl seemed prideful, cold and beautiful; however, she would genuinely care about those around her.

“Qiao Qiao, do not blame Xiaolian. I have faith in his mind,” Han Bi looked at Chen Xiaolian. “In the last instance dungeon, we were able to survive thanks to his wisdom!”

“...” Qiao Qiao stopped talking and looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“Let us sit down and discuss.”

Chen Xiaolian’s expression remained calm and the four of them sat down beside the road – at a time like this, they were unable to care about what others may think.

“Unnie, what are you all talking about?” Soo Soo blinked as she looked at Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao forced out a smile. “It is nothing. We are just discussing about a game.”

Chen Xiaolian casted a glance at Qiao Qiao and said. “This system prompt has a few loopholes. Or perhaps it cannot be considered as loopholes. However, it does provide us with information that we were

lacking before.”

“En?” Qiao Qiao’s eyebrows jumped and her eyes revealed a look of hopefulness. “What did you discover?”

“Firstly, Han Bi was the only one selected to participate in the instance dungeon while the two of us were not. There is also...” Chen Xiaolian casted a glance at Soo Soo. Qiao Qiao immediately understood what Chen Xiaolian meant: Soo Soo was also not selected.

“Then... the first question regarding this matter: Han Bi is an Awakened, we are not, we are irregularities in the system. In that case, does this selection only happen to Awakened ones? Can system irregularities like us escape this selection process?”

There may be many possible answers to this question. Perhaps my speculation is valid. Perhaps... it is just coincidence that we were not selected and Han Bi is the only one selected. No matter what, we must quickly ascertain the answer to this question: What type of conditions is used in the system selection process?”

“That makes sense,” Han Bi nodded his head.

“The second question... Is there a method to avoid being selected?” Chen Xiaolian looked at his two partners and spoke with certainty and confidence. “My guess is... there is definitely a method to avoid being selected! At the very least, I can confidently say that I believe we can change this state of ‘being selected by the system’ to ‘personally selecting an instance’! It must be possible!”

“Why do you believe that?” Qiao Qiao asked.

“It is simple... the Awakened ones that we have made contact with, be it the two fellows we met on the train or the ones Xia Xiaolei met, one important information was acquired: Awakened ones have their own organizations.

There exists many Awakened Guilds.

Now comes the other problem: Suppose that the conditions for selection are completely random. Theoretically speaking, there should not exist any

teams of Awakened ones! If the instance dungeon's participation is something that happens at random, formation of guilds would be pointless."

Qiao Qiao and Han Bi nodded thoughtfully.

"The biggest advantage in having guilds is the ability to coordinate fights and share resources. This is especially so when participating in the instance dungeon. A guild's team members could unite to do battle together as the strength of the guild outmatches the strength of a personal individual. However... if the participants for instance dungeons are randomly selected, then the very basis for creating a guild no longer exists!

Because if they are randomly selected, even a highly powerful guild cannot guarantee that their guild members would be selected for the same instance dungeon.

Since they will be randomly selected anyways for the instance dungeon, with no method to ensure that their guild members could participate together... what is the point of creating a guild?

This rationale is not hard to understand, right?

That is why; I feel that... for there to exist so many guilds within the Awakened community... that proves that they certainly have a method to solve the issue of 'being selected'!

They can either avoid being selected and also avoid being exterminated as punishment, or... they can control the selection process, with the ability to change 'being selected' to 'personally selecting' an instance dungeon.

That must be how it is!"

Qiao Qiao and Han Bi became more confident after hearing those words!

They were also in agreement that Chen Xiaolian's speculations were very convincing and logically impeccable.

“Then what should we do now?” Qiao Qiao asked in a heavy voice.

“According to my deductions, the most plausible method of avoiding ‘being selected’ is through guild formation! There are two ways to attempt this. First, we try forming our own guild. I believe there would also be a guild option within the system. We form our own organization; it is something that we will have to do sooner or later.”

Chen Xiaolian then looked at Han Bi... because the system feature of guild formation is not available for both him and Qiao Qiao!

Han Bi smiled bitterly. “En, I just took a look just now. My ‘Guild System’ is still locked; the prompt above it states that only Players that have participated in 5 instance dungeons can activate the Guild Mode and form their own guild. As for what one would acquire after forming a guild, it is not stated clearly. I fear that we will need to wait until the guild is established before the contents would be unlocked.”

“Then, the first path is no longer possible,” Chen Xiaolian said lightly. “It was as I have expected, there will be a barrier for the formation of guilds. Without this barrier, everyone would be able to avoid the state of ‘being selected’. The Development Team would not have tolerated the existence of such a big loophole.”

Watching the other two, Chen Xiaolian pondered for a moment. “Then, the second option... we need to quickly find an Awakened Guild and think of a way to become a member... that or we find a way to collect information. Information to help us understand what methods could be used to avoid the state of ‘being selected’.

Chen Xiaolian turned to face them again. “To find Awakened Guilds, the easiest way to do so would be...”

“To go to the location of the instance dungeon that Han Bi will soon have to participate in!” Qiao Qiao immediately understood and quickly uttered out. “The Awakened ones will certainly gather there to prepare to enter the instance dungeon!”

Chen Xiaolian could see that the two of them were feeling somewhat anxious. He deliberately gave out a smile. “Do not make horrible

assumptions about the situation. There are three of us; in addition, our level of strength is quite good. We managed to kill off 2 veteran Awakened ones. Moreover... as long as things do not get too rough, becoming a member in a guild should not be too difficult with our strength and potential. The only thing we need to do is find a well-intentioned guild that is suitable for us. That way, there should be a high likelihood to avoiding the state of 'being selected'."

Han Bi and Qiao Qiao were finally able to relax a little. They looked at Chen Xiaolian and the three of them laughed together.

However, at that very moment when the atmosphere had somewhat lightened up...

"Unnie."

On the side, Soo Soo suddenly opened her mouth to speak. The little girl frowned as she patted herself on her bun like face and massaged her head. "Something strange happened."

"Soo Soo, what is it?" Qiao Qiao put her arms around her little sister.

"Here," Soo Soo pointed at her own eyes. "My eyes appear to be seeing some strange things... some string of words seemed to have appeared."

Qiao Qiao's body trembled and her face turned dark. "String of words? Wha... what words?"

"Something about a prompt, in 48 hours enter some instance dungeon. It has a strange name, a V587. It seemed like I have been selected, if I do not arrive, it says I will be exterminated. Unnie, what does exterminated means?"

Qiao Qiao's body turned limp!

Chen Xiaolian moved quickly and went to support Qiao Qiao. He pinched her back and whispered. "Be steady! If you panic, she will become afraid!"

"..." Qiao Qiao's eyes turned red. She glanced at Chen Xiaolian, her eyes appearing weak.

She then forced out a smile and turned to Soo Soo. “The name of that instance dungeon, are you certain it is V587?”

“En, it is,” Soo Soo clutched her eyes. “Unnie, am I sick?”

“No... you are not sick. It is just... someone is playing a game with us,” Qiao Qiao hugged Soo Soo. She abruptly stood up and dragged Chen Xiaolian to another side.

“Xiaolian, I am asking you!” Qiao Qiao’s eyes were terrifying. “As I recall, the GM that you mentioned had informed you that you and Soo Soo are system irregularities, you two are different from an Awakened like Han Bi! Thus, if a system irregularity like you and Soo Soo dies in the instance dungeon... you two will not even have the chance to be revived and refreshed! You will completely disappear... is that true?”

Chen Xiaolian listened with a complicated look on his face. Finally, he nodded in silence.

Qiao Qiao grabbed on to Chen Xiaolian’s arm. “No matter what... I must save Soo Soo! If we cannot let her avoid the instance dungeon... I will simply join her! Xiaolian, I beg of you! Help me think of a way! Please find a way! You are so smart, to be able to discern out so many things...”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao’s face and saw traces of unconcealable weakness within her eyes.

He spread open his arms and lightly hugged Qiao Qiao as he whispered. “I will do what I can. Do not worry about it first. We have yet to arrive at the worst case scenario.”

Chapter 51: Newbie Seeking Membership

Chen Xiaolian's mind blanked out. It was only after his hands had embraced Qiao Qiao did the soft sensation of a young girl's body cause him to become startled. He snapped out of it and turned to see Qiao Qiao looking at him with a peculiar expression.

The atmosphere between them became awkward and the two of them quickly turned their gaze away.

...

...

A few hours later.

Shaanxi Airport.

Their group of four reached the passageway and Qiao Qiao checked the time using her mobile phone. "There is still 41 hours and 36 minutes."

Han Bi was obviously still distressed. He maintained a taciturn attitude and would only force out a smile when speaking. It was no wonder; he was selected to join the instance dungeon. In addition, the aggravating word 'exterminated' would weigh down heavily on any one.

Outside the airport, a commercial Buick GL8 was waiting. They had rented the car prior to boarding the plane.

After fetching the keys from the staff member of the rental company, the task of driving was handed over to Qiao Qiao.

"Did you check out the address?"

The face of Queen Qiao was filled with anxiousness.

"I have checked it," Chen Xiaolian glanced at Han Bi and gave out a bitter smile. "I fear that this instance dungeon will not be easy. Oh, right! Han Bi, how is your knowledge of history?"

"History?" Han Bi reflected for a while before shaking his head. "Back in school, I would always be sleeping during History lessons. Other than that... I did read up on historical novels regarding aerial architecture.

Does that count?"

Chen Xiaolian sighed. After pondering about it, he produced his mobile phone and opened Baidu . He selected a site and gave it to Han Bi. "Since we have the time, take advantage of it and make yourself familiar with it." [1]

Upon the screen was everything related to 'Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang'...

...

Before they had boarded the plane, Han Bi had obtained the latest information regarding the instance dungeon using the system.

The instance dungeon was located in Shaanxi City – coincidentally, that was the same place that the train they had sat on was headed for.

The specific location of the instance dungeon was also shown: 18 km northwest of Shaanxi City, the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang!

...

Roddy walked out of the train station, a dazed look etched upon his face.

At the current, he felt as though he was going crazy!

Truth be told, his mind had been a blurry mess of thoughts throughout the train ride.

If not for the fact that he was certain he was not sick – he would suspect that he had contracted a blanking out illness.

The reason being...

Roddy discovered that he seemed to have lost a part of his memories.

The last thing he could recall was that he had followed Chen Xiaolian into the train station. They then boarded the train as he helped Chen Xiaolian find Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo...

Next... his memories of what happened came to a halt!

When he came to, he found himself sitting upon a hard sleeper within the train. There was even an adorable fat cat within his embrace!

However, the problem was: Chen Xiaolian, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo were not on the train!

He could clearly recall himself telling Chen Xiaolian the number to Qiao Qiao's coach because he was the one who bought the coach ticket for her. Then... he could not bloody recall anything else!

Where is Xiaolian? Where is Qiao Qiao? Where is Soo Soo?

Why was he sitting alone on the hard sleeper bunk?

Where did this adorably fat cat in his bosom come from?

He tried to call up Chen Xiaolian's mobile phone. However, his calls could not get through.

It was not until he was walking out of the train station that his mobile phone rang.

The caller was Chen Xiaolian!

Accepting the call, Roddy immediately shouted out in a tearful voice. "Xiaolian! Where on Earth did you go to? I remember that we had boarded the train together! What is going on? Did you get down halfway through? But, this train should not have any stops along the way! My mind feels so confused now!"

From across the phone, Chen Xiaolian remained silent for a moment. He then asked. "Where are you now?"

"East area of the train station."

"Just stand there and wait for me."

The call was then ended.

...

One hour later, Roddy who was standing at the east area of the train station saw a black commercial Buick GL8 coming to a stop before him. The door of the car opened to reveal Chen Xiaolian sitting inside. He waved his hand. "Come in. We will talk inside!"

Annoyingly, the fat cat that had been obediently staying in his arms

suddenly jumped out and threw itself into Chen Xiaolian's arms.

Roddy was about to say something when a shocking scene played out before him. The fat cat within Chen Xiaolian's arms transformed into a beam of light and disappeared!

Roddy nearly fell with his buttocks to the ground. The dazed Roddy was then picked up by Chen Xiaolian into the car.

"Ah! You are all here!" Roddy stared at Chen Xiaolian, then turned to see Soo Soo sitting in the last row and Queen Qiao in the driver's seat. "How could all of you turn up here? I clearly remember all of you being on the train!"

He then looked at Han Bi who was sitting beside him. Roddy swallowed his saliva and asked. "Brother, how should I address you?"

Han Bi's pair of thick eyebrows wrinkled in a frown. "You cannot remember me? I am the one who beat you up time and again after you used Bush-ren."

"{Nani}?"

Chen Xiaolian waved his hand. "Let us not talk about this first."

Roddy regarded Chen Xiaolian with a slightly fearful expression. "You... could you be a monster in disguise?"

"Your entire family are monsters," Chen Xiaolian retorted before patting Roddy. "I need to ask you. Did you notice anything abnormal on the train?"

"Abnormal? You people are all abnormal!" Roddy cried out.

"That is not what I am asking about. Did you see any evidence of a fight in the train? Ah, for example, is the roof of the train broken apart?"

"No..." Roddy shook his head, his expression indicating that he was at a loss. "Only that the three of you had disappeared. I felt that something is wrong."

Qiao Qiao who was on the driver's seat used the back view mirror to look at Chen Xiaolian. Han Bi too, looked at him thoughtfully.

“It seems that things have been reset and refreshed,” Chen Xiaolian sighed. “However, we would not know if this is an automatic feature of the system or if the GM had interfered to help us out.”

“It is probably how things were meant to be,” Han Bi reflected on it. “Since this world plays host to those Awakened ones with superhuman abilities, any mistake on their part would cause something big to happen. If that were to happen, then some shaking news would have come to light a long time ago. If this world is a background setting, then such a thing cannot be allowed to happen. Thus, preserve the balance of this world... a refresh and reset is inevitable.”

“What do we do next? Do we head directly to the location of the instance dungeon?” Qiao Qiao asked as she drove.

“En,” Chen Xiaolian retrieved his mobile phone and checked out a map. “I found that there is a hotel near that location. Since there is still 40 hours until the opening time, we will first stay in the hotel. Also, since this hotel is the one closest to the area, other Awakened Guilds will certainly check in here before the opening time. Considering the time limit of 48 hours and the punishment of extermination, many of them would certainly arrive earlier for the sake of safety.”

“Then... what do we do when we meet those Awakened ones? Do we directly make contact by introducing ourselves?” Han Bi asked.

“Naturally not,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “The two Awakened ones we met on the train were not the good-hearted kind. It appears that not all within the Awakened community are pure and good. We will first conceal our identities by disguising as ordinary people... Do any of you have any suggestions?”

Originally, they had thought that concealing their identities would be hard. That was because both Awakened ones and Players share one similar feature within their system: Radar!

A green dot within the radar would expose the identity of anyone nearby.

However, Chen Xiaolian had tested it with his companions while they

were travelling. In the end, they discovered an aspect of the system. Alternatively, it could be said to be an exploitable loophole:

Only when both parties have their system activated by entering combat form, summoning their pet, using equipment or some other similar action, would the radar expose them.

If only one party were to use the system while the other party was not using the system, then the radar will not expose the latter as Awakened. Instead, they will appear as ordinary people.

That also explained why the longhaired man and the trench coat wearing middle-aged man could only recognize Chen Xiaolian by the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword pendant that he was wearing over his neck instead of by radar.

At that time, Chen Xiaolian was not using the system. Thus, the radar of other Awakened ones would not mark him as a green dot.

A rough description of when a system was being used is as follows: Activating the system mode's vision, using weapons, equipment or medicines, summoning War Pet and etc. As long as one of the conditions is met, the radar would expose that person.

The one that gave Chen Xiaolian this idea was none other than Xia Xiaolei. According to Xia Xiaolei, he had hidden and slept through his last instance dungeon safely... that meant the other Players' radar could not find him!

Thus, Chen Xiaolian had allocated some time towards testing the radar together with Qiao Qiao and Han Bi as they were travelling. Finally, they were able to verify these speculations.

“Any recommendation on how to hide our identities?”

Han Bi thought about it and said. “I have a suggestion. Do you remember what I told you before? The reason I am going to Shaanxi is for the sake of entering an aircraft model competition?”

“En?” Chen Xiaolian's eyes flashed. “Could it be...”

“The competition is precisely located in the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang. Due to how large the size of the area is, it could be used for the aircraft model competition.”

“Excellent,” Chen Xiaolian replied. “In that case, we will pretend to be the participating students... besides, all of us happen to be students.”

Roddy who was seated beside them shouted out. “Hey, what are you all talking about? Can anyone first answer my question? What exactly is going on here?”

Chen Xiaolian patted Roddy on his shoulders. “Do not be so annoyed, I will slowly explain everything to you. En, there is also one more thing that we need you to help out with.”

...

4.30 pm.

35 hours and 27 minutes before the opening of the instance dungeon.

A hotel outside the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang.

A commercial Buick came to a halt outside of the hotel. Several young boys and girls alighted from the car, carrying several bags of varying sizes. There were also two boxes with a ‘Handle with care’ sticker on it. Above those boxes, a plate bearing the word ‘X aircraft model competition’ was pasted above those boxes.

A thick browed youngster who was wearing a participation certificate around his neck led them in.

As they were walking into the hotel lobby, there were several guests in the midst of registering with the hotel. Some of them glanced curiously at them. Their attention was directed in particular to the long, black haired Qiao Qiao. Queen Qiao was wearing a school uniform; however, her attire could not conceal her atmosphere of youth and especially not her delicate face. Many of the surrounding males stole secret glances at her.

Tens of minutes later, Chen Xiaolian, Qiao Qiao, Han Bi and Soo Soo went downstairs together to the lobby area. They carried with them

several packages. Under the watchful eyes of many, they moved to the wide outer lawn area of the hotel. When there were no one else nearby, they opened up the packages and retrieved some aircraft models from within the packages.

Han Bi skilfully assembled those parts, then he used the remote control to send one of them up into the air.

“The standard types found in the stores are all trash. The models that I made have a better performance compared to this. A pity that mine was left on the train. I could no longer get it back,” Han Bi murmured resentfully as he controlled the aircraft.

“Ssh, silent!” Chen Xiaolian silently observed the aircraft that was flying in the air. “Be careful. I feel that there are people secretly looking at us.”

“Secretly looking at Qiao Qiao you mean,” Han Bi forced out a laugh.

“Eight o’clock direction,” Qiao Qiao lightly said. “Beneath the patio umbrella outside the hotel, there are two people sitting down and having coffee while looking at us.”

“As expected, a woman’s intuition is the most accurate one,” Chen Xiaolian laughed. He then whispered. “Are you sure they are not secretly peeping at you?”

Qiao Qiao remained indifferent as she replied. “Trust me, people would secretly peep at me whenever I take a walk in the streets ever since my younger days. So, I am used to it. A woman’s intuition is very accurate in this respect – those two fellows are not looking at me, they are looking at you and Han Bi.”

“All right, we will first ignore them,” Chen Xiaolian then sighed. “Right... about the next step... do you really want to continue?”

Qiao Qiao’s cheeks tightened. She took a deep breath and bit her lips. After that, she slowly moved to Chen Xiaolian’s side, her arms extending outwards to hold onto Chen Xiaolian’s arm as she placed her head onto Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder.

Chen Xiaolian could feel Qiao Qiao’s long and straight, black hair

sweeping past his neck. That itching feeling almost seeped deep down into his heart. In addition, the unique fragrance of a female girl flowed into his nose, causing his mind to fall into a momentary trance.

Chen Xiaolian's face turned stiff and his heart pounded in a frenzy. Finally, he was able to suppress his distracted heart and he turned around to gently kiss Qiao Qiao upon her forehead.

"... sorry," Chen Xiaolian said in a low tone.

"It is all right," Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth.

From a distance, this seemed like a perfectly normal and harmonious scene. A group of students playing with aircraft models on the green lawn on a beautiful spring's afternoon. Then, a couple would stand side by side as the girl rested her head upon her boyfriend's shoulder. The boyfriend reacted by gently kissing...

It was simply too normal of an occurrence.

"The two men beneath the patio umbrella are no longer looking at us," Qiao Qiao turned her head sideways while resting it upon Chen Xiaolian's shoulder and whispered into his ear.

...

"Admiring beauties?" Beneath the patio umbrella, a middle-aged man with sunglasses smiled. "Tomorrow, after we finished this instance dungeon's quest, I will take you out to properly relax. Getting girls is easy; we now have plenty of money."

Sitting across from him was a gaunt, thin-jawed young man. His eyes flashed with profound brightness and he retorted coldly. "Keep your messy state of mind on a leash. We have a big battle coming and yet you can still spout out these kinds of words. I do not mind ordering a coffin for you first."

"Hahaha! Do not forget, if we die, a coffin is of no use. We will be refreshed; returned to a normal life," Having said that, the sunglasses man suddenly laughed out bitterly and whispered. "I actually feel that... that may not be bad. Going on with life thoughtlessly; I won't have to live

like this all the time.”

“Killing you off, then duplicating a portion of your memories, using that to refresh out another person... do you think that person is still you? Heng...” The gaunt young man sneered. He then turned his gaze away from Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao. “Those teenagers should be normal people.”

“En? Are you certain?”

“They have the face of students,” The gaunt man coldly replied. “Besides... they have the guts to play outside and be so affectionate when the battle is looming. Is there any Awakened ones who would take their lives so lightly?”

Then, the gaunt man turned to the sunglasses man. “I hear that you lost two men?”

“Heng!” Sunglasses man coldly replied. “You sure are informed. I sent those two fellows out to perform a simple task, and yet... let us not talk about this.”

The sunglasses man picked up his cup of coffee and took one gulp. “Let us discuss about this time’s instance dungeon! Are you willing to cooperate? I am waiting for your reply!”

The gaunt man’s fingers gently tapped the table surface several times. He then slowly said. “If we are to cooperate, I have a condition. For this instance dungeon, it is all right if I do not get the system reward. However, there is one item that I must certainly obtain!”

As he spoke, the gaunt man produced a piece of paper and a pen. He quickly wrote something down and slipped the piece of paper towards the sunglasses man. Sunglasses man glanced at it and became thoughtful for a moment. Then, he stood up and extended his hand. “Deal!”

The gaunt man picked up the piece of paper that was on the table and burnt it with a lighter. After that, he stood up and extended his hand to shake hands with sunglasses man. “Then, here is to our happy cooperation, Guild Leader Nangong.”

“To our happy cooperation, Guild Leader Qiu Yun.”

At that moment, a burst of noise suddenly resonated out from the entrance of the hotel.

A taxi came to a halt before the hotel entrance and a young man wearing a strange get-up stepped out from the taxi.

His attire was strange, akin to the ancient European armour props usually seen in movies. In his hands was a longbow while a dagger was strapped onto his thigh.

As for his hair, it was unknown just how much styling gel he had used as it towered high up, similar to a rooster's comb.

When he saw that, Chen Xiaolian who was standing far away on the lawn could not help himself as he laughed out. Qiao Qiao lightly struck his shoulder and whispered. “You got him to dress up like that? To think that Roddy would agree to do that for you!”

Chen Xiaolian snickered and chose to remain silent...

Neither of them realized that they were both still maintaining the intimate stance that they had taken earlier: Qiao Qiao was partially leaning onto Chen Xiaolian's chest.

...

Roddy stood at the entrance of the hotel. His eye-catching appearance naturally attracted the peculiar gazes from the surrounding people.

Outrageously...

This fellow abruptly moved to stand at the centre position and shouted out in a loud voice:

“Seeking membership! Newbie seeking membership! Are there any teams recruiting new members?”

PU!!

The two Guild Leaders that were originally drinking coffee under the patio umbrella ended up losing their composure.

This was especially true for the one wearing sunglasses, Guild Leader Nangong. His mouth sprayed out a mouthful of coffee and he coughed out several times as he stared at Roddy who was shouting loudly some distance away. He opened his mouth. “Holy shit... do newbies these days have no fear of death? He dares to come alone to seek membership in front of so many people?”

Nangong, raw: ‘南宮’. ‘南’/ ‘nán’ means ‘south’ – ‘宮’/ ‘gōng’ means ‘palace’.

Qiu Yun, raw: ‘秋隕’. ‘秋’/ ‘qiū’ means ‘autumn’ – ‘隕’/ ‘yǔn’ means ‘shooting star / pass away’.

1 Baidu is a web service company in China that provides many types of services. One of which is a search engine.

2 ‘Nani’ is Japanese for ‘what’.

Extra: Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang (First Emperor of China) is located in Lintong District, Xi’an, Shaanxi Province, China. The tomb itself has not been excavated and archaeological works are mostly focused on the surrounding areas of the tomb. It is divided into inner and outer cities. The circumference of the inner city is 2.5 km (1.55 miles) and the outer is 6.3 km (3.9 miles) [Source: Wiki]

Chapter 52: You Know Quite A Lot

[TL: This chapter contains minor sexual innuendos.]

Qiu Yun's gaunt face revealed traces of surprise. "Is he a newbie Awakened?"

Guild Leader Nangong sneered. "I am now curious to see just what this fellow is capable of."

He made a secret gesture and two people who had appeared to be resting within the hotel lobby stood up and moved to the centre area. Roddy became interposed between them as they held him, restrain his ability to shout and brought him over to the area beneath the patio umbrella.

Chen Xiaolian who was standing far away immediately became anxious as he stared intently at Roddy.

"Hey! What are you people doing? Who are you people?" Roddy then shouted out loudly on purpose.

"Are you a newbie?" Guild Leader Nangong wiped his mouth with a piece of tissue and smiled contemptuously as he looked at Roddy. "What abilities do you have?"

Roddy purposely blinked his eyes. "And who are you? What qualifications do you have to ask me that?"

Guild Leader Nangong laughed derisively and one of the men beside Roddy whispered. "Little rookie, show some manners when talking. This man is our Guild Leader, Nangong!"

"Guild Leader?" Roddy's eyes turned about. "Oh? Then, which guild are you people from?"

"Enough nonsense! Kid, what abilities do you have? Be honest and tell us. If it is not bad, I can consider accepting you," Nangong laughed coldly.

"My abilities?" Roddy first lifted his head up high and laughed out in arrogance. "Very well! I am also one who slaughtered my way out from

the mountain of blades and the ocean of flames! Listen carefully! I am the solo queue with the highest burst damage, the Might of Demacia, Bush-
ren, the invincible warrior for all students and high schoolers! Now, what is the strength of your guild? This brother is not interested in joining a third-rate group!”

“Wha, what? What powerful solo queue... what Bush-ren?” Nangong was momentarily stunned.

The guild member’s face too turned peculiar and he lowered his voice. “Guild Leader, the things that he is talking about... seems to be about a game of sorts.”

“Game?” Nangong became highly infuriated. “Kid, what nonsense are you blabbing about? What game and what Demacia!”

“Hey, you are the one blabbing nonsense!” Roddy instead stared at him and shouted back. “You do not even know about Demacia and you dare call me over? Uncle, what are you up to?”

Nangong’s face turned strange. “You... are you really an Awakened one?”

“What awaken or sleep? What is that?” Roddy raised his head up again.

Nangong furiously retorted. “If you are not an Awakened one, why did you come over here to shout and ask for membership?”

“I am the one who should be asking you! Our LOL_cosplay’s hard-core enthusiasts had agreed to set up our event here! Uncle, if you do not know anything, why did you drag me all the way here?” Roddy struggled to get away from the men beside him. “Will you please not waste my time?”

Cosplay?? LOL???

Guild Leader Nangong stared with wide-open eyes. Thankfully, one of his guild members beside him whispered. “Guild Leader... his words seem to check out. Demacia is indeed something from a game. Err, I do play that game as well.”

Traces of indignation and savagery flashed across Guild Leader Nangong’s eyes. He suddenly threw a look and one of his men instantly

threw a punch onto Roddy's stomach. Roddy let out a painful groan and his body bent over.

The guild member narrowed his eyes and turned to Nangong. He shook his head. "No response from the system. It seems he is really just an ordinary person."

As he spoke, he immediately pulled out the dagger strapped onto Roddy's thigh and examined it. "Plastic."

"Forget it."

Qiu Yun finally spoke up. He laughed lightly and looked at Nangong. "We have more important matters to do. Why make things difficult for a normal person? Truth is, you are the one who misunderstood him, Guild Leader Nangong. It is not as though he came over to lie to you. There is no real reason for you to get tangled up with a young kid."

After that, Qiu Yun laughed and glanced at Roddy. He waved his hand. "Youngster, you can leave. We got the wrong person, sorry."

The two guild members holding onto Roddy turned to look at Nangong. Seeing no reply from Nangong, they let go of their hold.

"Scram, kid!" One of the guild member sneered. "Leave this place as fast as you can. Otherwise, we will break your legs."

Roddy's face revealed a terrified expression. "You, you people... are you members of the underworld?"

"Heng!" Nangong stood up. He casted a glance at Roddy, then turned around and left. The two guild members also threw vicious gazes at him before moving to follow Nangong.

"Just leave, youngster," Qiu Yun pulled out a cigarette lighter and lit up a cigarette for himself before laughing. "I will give you one suggestion. It would be best for you to leave this hotel."

Seeing Qiu Yun getting up and walking into the hotel lobby, Roddy quickly followed. He walked by Qiu Yun's side and said loudly. "That, my sincere thanks to senior... Earlier, if not for you, I... I do not even know

who those people are. That was so bewildering!”

Qiu Yun walked into the elevator and glanced at Roddy. “Youngster, if you trust me, then just leave this place.”

After the doors to the elevator were closed, Roddy gave a faint smile. He stood there and observed the digital display for the elevator. He confirmed that it had made its stop at the 8th floor before turning around to leave.

...

Half an hour later, within a room.

“Are you certain it is the 8th floor?”

Chen Xiaolian directed his gaze towards Roddy who just walked out of the washroom. All the styling gel on Roddy’s head have been washed off and he used one hand to wipe his head with a towel. He said. “At any rate, I saw the elevator stop at the 8th floor.”

“Han Bi, it’s your turn,” Chen Xiaolian turned his head towards the thick browed youngster.

Han Bi moved to the balcony and sent out a radio-controlled model aircraft that has a miniature camcorder tied onto it.

Under Han Bi’s control, the radio-controlled aircraft flew around the hotel a few times before returning...

The group of youngsters gathered before the camcorder’s screen.

Chen Xiaolian’s expression brightened as he stared at the images captured on the screen. “In my estimation, Awakened ones and normal people are different. Due to the constant dangers and killings that Awakened ones encountered within instance dungeons, they will certainly develop a high level of vigilance and self-protective mind-set. Thus... just look, from the pictures taken using the aircraft, we can see that most of the rooms in the eighth floor have their curtains left open.

Only a few rooms have their curtains closed – to close the curtains in the middle of the day, that is not normal.”

“Why is it not possible for a couple to be inside engaging in pa pa pa? ”

Roddy could not help but refute.

“We have a child in the room, watch your language,” Chen Xiaolian curled down the side of his lips.

Roddy casted a glance at Soo Soo. She was lying down on the bed wearing her bunny eared headphones and listening to music. He spread opened his arms and said. “All right, let us assume that you are right.”

“I cannot guarantee that it is a hundred per cent correct. At the very least, though... the ones who have their curtains closed have a higher probability of being Awakened ones. Additionally, you have already confirmed that the man is staying in the 8th floor. Then... logically speaking, we only need to check up on those rooms with closed curtains. That way, we will be able to find the Awakened one that helped Roddy.”

“However, why must we find him?” Han Bi frowned.

“The reason... first, when Roddy was being beaten up, that fellow had stepped out to stop them,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly. “Someone who does not bully the weak or innocent; I dare not guarantee that he is a good and kind-hearted man. However, people like this are often people who hold on to principles when taking actions.

Do you all know what I was most afraid of when I found the existence of such a group of Awakened ones?

These Awakened ones are not ‘Players’ who came from the outside. They are the original residents of this world. Yet, these residents were able to acquire superhuman abilities. When an ordinary person obtains superhuman abilities, they will suddenly find themselves unchained from the secular, legal, moral and other constraints of this world. This could easily trigger a change in a person’s personality. Once one loses control of themselves, they would be unable to differentiate right from wrong, becoming thugs...

Trust me, many people will end up changing so!

An Awakened one who possess the ability to freely trample upon the secular rules and yet chooses to adhere to the principle of not bullying

the weak – if I have to deal with any Awakened ones, I would rather it be him!”

“All right, we will take your word for it,” Han Bi nodded.

“But...” Roddy looked at the screen and counted. “One, two, three, four, five... en, there are currently five rooms with closed curtains on the 8th floor. How do we know which one he is in?”

Chen Xiaolian produced a piece of map of the hotel floor. “Follow the pictures taken for the rooms, then compare it with the position on this map – the construction of each floor is the same, that way, we can guess the room number for those rooms.”

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Qiao Qiao who had been seated quietly by the side. “Next up, Qiao Qiao will have to step up. She will use the room’s hotel phone and call them up one by one...”

“Can’t we just go directly to their door and search one by one?” Roddy asked.

“That would be beating the bush to startle the snake,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “If we end up meeting other Awakened ones, what should we do if they turn out to be villainous? We are newbies and our strength is not that strong. What happens if they have ill intentions? Cases where one kills others to snatch their items, surely you have seen such a matter when playing games?”

“Giving them a call? Won’t our identity be exposed?” Han Bi frowned.

“That is why... Big Miss Qiao needs to do it,” Chen Xiaolian suppressed a smile and looked at Qiao Qiao. “That... are you prepared? I know that doing this would be quite difficult for you, but...”

“For the sake of Soo Soo, I can throw even my life away!” Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth. She stood up and walked to the phone within the room. Wearing the face of a morally upright person entering the execution grounds, she turned to Chen Xiaolian. “Bring over the room numbers!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly wrote it down on a piece of paper, then he handed it over. “Set to speaker! Let Roddy listen to the other person’s

voice and judge if that is him!”

Qiao Qiao’s face was grim. She looked at the few room numbers within her hands and proceeded to quietly make the call.

The first call:

“Hello?” A perfunctory sound of a male came through.

“How are you ~ ” Big Miss Qiao suddenly issued out a voice that sent a chill down the spines of each of the boys within the room!

That soft voice, it could only be called baby like, it could only be considered sweet!

“Who is this?”

“Hello, Mister. Do you require any special services ~ ”

Pa!

The call was ended.

With a flushed face, Qiao Qiao turned to look at Roddy who immediately shook his head. “No, that is not his voice.”

Qiao Qiao picked up the phone, took a deep breath and made the second call.

“Hello?”

“Hello, mister! Do you require any special services ~ ”

“ ... What services is there?”

“... Custom made – silk clothing – full set inclusive of stockings, one thousand eight ~”

“Son of a bitch, that is too expensive! Are you embedded with gold? Scram!”

The call was broken off.

Roddy. “This, this is also not his voice.”

Chen Xiaolian forced down his smile as he looked at Qiao Qiao.
“Custom made – silk clothing – full set inclusive of stockings... Queen

Qiao, you know quite a lot...”

“Shut up!” Qiao Qiao shot daggers at all the boys within the room with her eyes. “If anyone dares to speak of this matter in the future, I will kill him!”

1 ‘Pa pa pa’ = lovemaking session.

2 Beating the bush to startle the snake. One of the famed 36 stratagems where one does something big that has no clear purpose to illicit a response from the enemy. This could either arouse the enemy’s suspicion or disrupt their thoughts. A double edged strategy.

Chapter 53: Only One

Qiu Yun gently wiped his hands clean and exited the washroom. Just as he had closed the doors to the washroom, he heard the phone in the room ringing.

He went over to pick it up. "Hello?"

"Hello, mister. Do you require any special services ~"

Holding on to the phone, Qiu Yun revealed a peculiar smile. "Ok."

"... Ok?" The voice from the other side became stunned for a moment. "Are you not going to ask the price? Or list of services?"

"Money is not a problem," Qiu Yun casually looked at the windows and gently waved his fingers. The closed curtain slowly opened up. He spoke leisurely. "As for the list of services, note down what I require."

"..." The other party was speechless for a long time.

"I need a water bucket. It would be best if there is also an absorbent sponge. Oh right, I have yet to have my dinner. When you come over, get me a sandwich. I want beef, I dislike luncheon meat."

"You, do you have any other requests?"

"En..." Qiu Yun thought for a while. "What perfume do you use? En, never mind. Just bring whichever bottle over. If you do not have any perfume, then you should at least have essential oils, right?"

"..."

"Move fast, I am very busy. I will give you half an hour. If you cannot arrive by then, I will leave," Qiu Yun casually placed down the phone. He then walked to a side and picked up the newspaper within the room before sitting down on the sofa, reading the newspaper.

...

Tens of minutes later.

The doorbell rang.

Qiu Yun raised his head to look at the door. With a flick of his fingers, the lock on the door snapped open. "Come on in, the door is unlocked."

Qiao Qiao pushed open the door. With a solemn expression, she entered the room and looked around.

The first thing she felt was: Clean!

This person's room seemed spotless and the bed sheets showed no traces of folds. It was as though no one had slept on it before. The light from the windows shined brightly.

Qiu Yun was sitting upon the sofa facing the door; his head was looking down at the newspaper. Without raising his head, he said in an indifferent voice. "Close the door after you come in... oh, right. The one outside the door can come in too. I do not have much time and I do not feel like accompanying some children in their play acting."

Qiao Qiao's face became tense and she subconsciously clenched her fist.

Chen Xiaolian came from behind and held Qiao Qiao. He pulled her to his back and walked into the room.

After the door was closed, Chen Xiaolian gestured to Qiao Qiao for her to stand by the door while he walked over.

Qiu Yun raised his head to look at Chen Xiaolian, his face showing no trace of surprise at all. His gaze then fell upon Chen Xiaolian's hands that were holding onto a water bucket. He then laughed. "Very good, it seems you did bring over the thing that I requested."

"May I ask, which flaw allowed you to see through us?" Chen Xiaolian inhaled deeply and looked at Qiu Yun vigilantly.

"Essentially... there should be none," Qiu Yun laughed. "However, it was too coincidental."

"Coincidental?"

Qiu Yun slowly folded the newspaper and placed it on the coffee table. "When I was in the lobby, I had observed you all as you were playing with

the model aircrafts. Your acting were very good. I guess you were all originally students; that is why the atmosphere of students coming off you was very strong. Thus, you had successfully concealed yourselves from me.

However, the fellow who appeared in the lobby shouting loudly to seek for team membership, his appearance was too coincidental.

Then, your model aircraft circled the hotel a few times.

Followed by the phone asking whether I need any special services.

Every one of these incidents should not pose any problems and had no flaws. However, for so many incidents to happen within one hour, it was only inevitable that I would become suspicious.

Oh, right. The final aspect that I would comment on would be that phone call from your girlfriend. It was very unprofessional.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiu Yun.

Qiu Yun produced a pack of cigarettes and made a gesture to Chen Xiaolian, but Chen Xiaolian shook his head. Qiu Yun lit one up for himself and laughed out softly. “Her voice had traces of nervousness.”

Qiu Yun then glanced at Chen Xiaolian. “Where is the supper I requested?”

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment. Then, he retrieved a fully wrapped sandwich from the water bucket. “We bought it from the hotel.”

“Thank you.”

Qiu Yun took it. Without suspecting anything, he tore open the wrapping and took a bite. “Not bad.”

“Aren’t you afraid it might be poisoned?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“No,” Qiu Yun smiled. “If a few rookies can poison me, I deserve to die.”

Qiu Yun suddenly pointed to Qiao Qiao who was standing by the door. “I will talk with you, ask that girl to help me clean the washroom. En, give her the water bucket, it will be necessary.”

Qiao Qiao was taken aback for an instant. She then subconsciously opened the doors to the washroom...

The instant that the door was opened, Qiao Qiao's face suddenly changed!

In the washroom, a corpse was lying inside! Blood was splattered all over the place, the walls, the mirror... the floor...

Qiao Qiao's legs subconsciously turned limp.

"I am very sorry. Before you arrived, I had to take care of an uninvited guest," Qiu Yun laughed in a calm manner – the aura he released made Chen Xiaolian feel that this person was not easy to deal with. "This fellow hid in my room with the intention of ambushing me. This idea was most foolish."

Chen Xiaolian realized that Qiu Yun was staring at him. Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and tried his best to calm himself. He stood up and handed Qiao Qiao the water bucket. Squeezing her arm, he whispered. "Clean the washroom, I will talk with him."

Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth and brought the water bucket into the washroom.

"You still have 15 minutes," Qiu Yun have already eaten more than half of the sandwich.

"We are newbies," Chen Xiaolian quickly said. "We have experienced one instance dungeon before and become Awakened ones. So, we want to join a team. Or... we would like to request some help from a team. We can give compensation or pay you."

"I am not surprised," Qiu Yun lightly said. "In every instance dungeon, there will always be some hapless unaffiliated newbies who get selected. However, I feel that your approach is quite creative. At least you did not go choose that Nangong – By the way, that youngster in the lobby, is that your friend? He is an ordinary person."

"Yes, he is my friend," Chen Xiaolian slowly replied.

“You should not reveal the matters of our world to ordinary people. That would only invite trouble,” Qiu Yun frowned. “Never mind though, his memories will be refreshed anyways.”

“I have a friend who was selected by this instance dungeon,” Chen Xiaolian said quickly. “We want to know what are the conditions used in the selection process.”

“Anything else?” Qiu Yun remained indifferent and asked.

“And...” Chen Xiaolian slowly continued. “What method can we use to avoid being selected by the instance dungeon, or to change the instance dungeon’s choice?”

“You did not ask if there is a method, but instead you directly asked what method to use,” Qiu Yun’s eyes flashed and he looked at Chen Xiaolian with interest. “How do you know for certain that there will be a method to avoid selection?”

“Due to the existence of guilds,” Chen Xiaolian’s reply was simple, however, Qiu Yun understood at once.

“Smart kid,” Qiu Yun praised. “If that was surmised by you alone, then your intellect would qualify you to enter my team.”

“I want to know if there is any method to avoid this time’s instance dungeon... or, if it is not possible to avoid, I would like to enter this instance dungeon together with my friend.”

“You were not selected by the instance dungeon?” Qiu Yun looked at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

Qiu Yun laughed. “It is good to be young. To be hot-blooded and impulsive.”

He took a deep puff from his cigarette. “Do you know the danger level of this instance dungeon?”

“Is there an instance dungeon with no danger?”

“It is different this time,” Qiu Yun slowly replied. “The number for this

time's instance dungeon is V587. As a rookie, you probably do not know of this. Any instance dungeon with the V letter on it has a middle-upper level of difficulty. In addition, it is also a large-scale instance dungeon.”

Looking at Chen Xiaolian's expression, Qiu Yun shook his head. “A large-scale instance means that there will be many people involved in this instance dungeon. It is a place where Players and Awakened ones engage in a chaotic battle.”

“Could it be that the same does not occur for all instance dungeons?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“Some instances have a low level of difficulty and a high level of loot. These instances can only be entered by Players. The barriers for Awakened ones are extremely high,” Qiu Yun replied indifferently. “We are always in a disadvantage when going up against Players. This time's instance dungeon highly reflects this. Based on past practices, this large-scale instance dungeon will have a far higher number of Players compared to us Awakened ones. In addition... due to it being a middle-upper difficulty instance, some high-levelled Players will participate. It is likely that not even you could imagine just how powerful those high-levelled Players could be. After entering the instance dungeon, Awakened ones like us must not only fight off the monsters within the instance dungeon... we will also become prey in the eyes of those high-levelled Players.”

After saying that, Qiu Yun sighed. “So, if you ask me, I will give you this advice... go, leave this place. Take advantage of the fact that you were lucky enough to not be selected this time and go do what it is you wish to do. Go enjoy every second of every day that you currently have. Go roll around the sheets with that beautiful girlfriend of yours or go get drunk.

Because... the day will soon come, when you will be selected to enter an instance dungeon and you will have to experience a high level of challenge. Even if you have a good mind and good strength, enough for you to successfully overcome those dangers a few times; sooner or later, you will end up dying within an instance. When that happens... that would be the end of everything for you. You will be reverted to an ordinary

person and forget everything. You will live the life of an ordinary human, free of all these troubles.”

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian would not reveal the truth regarding him being an irregularity, one who cannot be revived after death. He thought about it and used a peculiar tone to ask Qiu Yun. “After dying and being refreshed... is that still the real me? The real me is already dead. The system then copies out a part of my memories and copies out a body for me... but that me is only a prop for this world’s background. I have never had any belief that this so-called resurrection is a true resurrection!”

Qiu Yun seemed moved and he suddenly examined Chen Xiaolian with a previously unseen look of respect.

“In recent years, you are the first newbie to have said that to me.”

Qiu Yun raised an eyebrow. “Interesting fellow. Do kids these day all have these kind of mind-set?”

“I have also pondered about some matters before,” Chen Xiaolian said in a low voice. “If this world is truly one that was created... all of us are but codes or background characters within a game... then everything that I have experienced, parental affection, emotions, love, my family, my life... could it be that all of these are but things that were produced or under the control of others?

When sick as a child, there is the warm embrace of the mother. There is the scene where father would apply medicine for me when I fall. When I go to school, I get a crush on a girl. That confusing riot of emotions, beautiful, sentimental, sweet...

All of that were but a program compiled by others?

I have thought about these before.”

“And then? Did you not mentally collapse? Did you not lose your sense of self?” Qiu Yun gave a light smile.

“Thankfully, I have a part-time job; I am a writer and making up stories is what I do for a living,” Chen Xiaolian lightly replied. “Creating a virtual world, characters and emotions.... After I became mentally lost, I found

the motivation to support me and give me strength to go forward.”

“What is that motivation?”

“I want to know... what kind of an existence are they?” Chen Xiaolian replied. “If we are ‘false’, then what is considered ‘real’.”

“So, you still refuse to give up on your friend? Even though you know that this instance is very dangerous, you still want to enter?” Qiu Yun laughed.

“If I really do lose those feelings, then wouldn’t it prove that all my emotions are fake? I cannot accept that! I firmly believe that my emotions are real!”

Qiu Yun looked at the youngster before him. Observing the face that still holds some traces of childishness, his heart suddenly felt a little soft.

These thought... it was the same ones he had after he had learned of the truth...

“You are very lucky,” Qiu Yun nodded his head. “You came to me, instead of Nangong... Nangong’s guild is a mass production type of guild. Only a rare handful of newbies would be able to survive becoming a member of his guild.”

“Then, are you willing to help me?”

“Of course, it will not be for free,” Qiu Yun smiled. “What price are you willing to pay?”

Chen Xiaolian pondered for a moment. “In the last instance dungeon, I obtained some loot.”

“I do not need it,” Qiu Yun replied indifferently. “I have entered many instance dungeons, the things I have obtained are numerous.”

Qiu Yun did not even bother asking Chen Xiaolian what items he has.

Chen Xiaolian thought about it. “You know more than I do. Perhaps... could you please make your offer?”

“As I have said, you are very lucky.”

Qiu Yun extinguished the cigarette in his hand. "There is a corpse in the washroom."

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

"He was a team member under me. Originally he should have followed me to enter this instance dungeon. Then... one day before we enter the instance dungeon, he snuck into my room to ambush me."

Qiu Yun's words were spoken with calmness. However, after Chen Xiaolian heard them, his heart roiled about!

"I do not know who bought him... or should I say, I have a few suspects. I personally killed him... but now I am faced with a problem. I had intended to bring him with me into this instance; however, he is now dead. Presently, if I were to mobilize my team members to come over to participate... first, with only one and a half days' time, there is not enough time. My team members are scattered all across the world. And so, I am unable to determine if they can make it in time. Secondly... even if the person I picked do hurry over, there is no way for me to know if they have been bought."

Qiu Yun's eyes flashed with coldness.

Chen Xiaolian's heart rate quickened.

"That is why, your luck is quite good. Originally, I am reluctant to accept newbies before the instance dungeon opens," Qiu Yun's face revealed a peculiar trace of a smile. "However, a coincidence occurred... traitors have appeared within my team. And before I can clean house, I am unable to bring myself to trust any of them. Thus..."

"What you mean to say..."

"The fellow that I killed has one spot for entering this instance dungeon," Qiu Yun said indifferently.

"Only one?" Chen Xiaolian frowned.

"Only one."

Chapter 54: I Will Go!

“I will go!”

Qiao Qiao had at an unknown moment moved out from the washroom; some bloodstains were still sticking to her arms. She shouted those words loudly. After a pause, she quickly added. “I will enter your team!”

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao quickly said. “I must be by Soo Soo’s side.”

“Who is Soo Soo?” Qiu Yun asked indifferently.

“My little sister.”

Hearing this, Qiu Yun laughed and pointed at Chen Xiaolian. “Then, the matter is settled, I choose you.”

“What?” Qiao Qiao’s face paled.

“It is simple, what I need is a temporary assistant. Even if it is only temporary, that person must be qualified to be my assistant. When completing my orders, I can tolerate my assistant using whatever spare time available to help care for his friend. However... it is obvious that your little female friend considers her little sister’s safety as her primary objective. I do not wish to take in someone like this as my assistant to enter the instance dungeon.”

Qiao Qiao’s face contorted and she casted her gaze at Chen Xiaolian, anxiousness filling her eyes.

“That is enough, Qiao Qiao,” Chen Xiaolian sighed. “I will go. Do not worry, I will do my best to ensure Soo Soo’s safety. Besides...”

He did not say anything else.

He had wanted to say that Qiao Qiao had never gone through an instance dungeon before. Since he had done so once, he should have a higher ability to adapt.

It was then that Chen Xiaolian recalled that both him and Qiao Qiao were not Awakened ones, but rather... Irregularities!

It would be best to temporarily keep this a secret from Qiu Yun.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian found that he had received a message through the system.

[Prompt, Message Received: Someone is inviting you to join a Guild, do you wish to accept?]

Chen Xiaolian raised his head to look at Qiu Yun. Qiu Yun then nodded his head.

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath...

[Accept!]

Soon, some new changes appeared within the interface in his line of sight.

[Prompt: You have joined 'Meteor Rock Guild' and can now use team channel, buy team exclusive equipment etc. Please check the team features].

[Prompt: As a guild member of 'Meteor Rock Guild', you have been added into the list of participants for the V587 instance dungeon by the Guild Leader. Do you wish to accept?]

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Qiu Yun.

[Accept!] [Prompt: You have become a participant in the V587 instance dungeon. 33 hours and 26 minutes before the instance dungeon opens. Unless the participant dies before entering the instance dungeon, the list of names cannot be changed].

"I believe that you presently need to get acquainted with some things," Qiu Yun gave out a light laugh. "I will give you some time to say goodbye to your friends, then... 10 hours before the instance dungeon opens, come join up with me."

"... Thank you."

Chen Xiaolian straightened himself and forcibly pulled Qiao Qiao who had a dazed look on her face. The both of them walked out of Qiu Yun's room.

Just as they were about to walk into the elevator outside, Qiao Qiao suddenly grabbed Chen Xiaolian's arm. "Xiaolian! You promised me... I need to enter the instance dungeon! I cannot, cannot let Soo Soo..."

"Shut up!" Chen Xiaolian suddenly grabbed and forcibly pushed her against the elevator wall!

Peng!

"What do you think this is? Play house? A game?" Chen Xiaolian's face was grim. "This is not a world where you get to dictate anything! In this world, having money and beauty does not mean that others will definitely want to look at you or pay attention to your actions! This is a cruel, new world! One wrong step will lead to death!

Just because you want something, it does not mean that you will get it!"

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian's face was somewhat fierce, causing Qiao Qiao to become stunned.

"Huu..."

Chen Xiaolian deeply exhaled and released Qiao Qiao. He then whispered. "Sorry, I became too impetuous."

"... I am the one who should be sorry," Qiao Qiao bit down hard on her lips. "Now..."

"There is no need to talk about it," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "I have already made my decision... additionally, matters have already fallen into place. For this instance dungeon, I will enter. I will do my best to protect Soo Soo."

He looked at Qiao Qiao. "Don't worry... there is no point in worrying! There is nothing we could do about it! We have already obtained the best possible outcome for now."

Qiao Qiao remained worried.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes suddenly flickered. "I need to ask you something."

He abruptly grabbed Qiao Qiao's arm and asked in a lowered tone. "When you were cleaning up the blood stains and the corpse, did you find

a metallic sphere?”

“...No,” Qiao Qiao shook her head.

Chen Xiaolian’s face became somewhat peculiar.

...

After returning to the room, Chen Xiaolian did not talk much. Instead, he let Qiao Qiao explain what happened to Han Bi and Roddy.

He remained by their side, listening. At the same time, he was also carefully looking at the new features available in the system.

Guild features.

...

The Guild features were partially similar to what Chen Xiaolian had speculated before.

At least, there was an ‘instance dungeon selection’.

However, this option was in grey. Clearly, Chen Xiaolian did not have enough authority. It was likely that only the Guild Leader of the guild will have the authority to control that aspect.

Although... true to its name, instance dungeon selection should be able to counter the scenario of ‘being selected by the instance dungeon’!

As expected, there was a leeway for guilds.

Despite not being able to open the grey coloured option, he could see the notes beside it.

After a moment of silence, Chen Xiaolian spoke out. “It seems, my speculations from before have been confirmed.”

“What did you discover?” Han Bi quickly asked.

“Guilds give a very big advantage,” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “It should mean as follows: Once an Awakened one joins a guild, that person will be able to avoid being selected by an instance dungeon that is opening up. That person will no longer be selected by an instance dungeon and forced to participate.”

“That is good news,” Han Bi nodded his head.

“Not necessarily. There is no such thing as a free lunch in this world,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “That individual will not be selected by the instance dungeon. However, the guild cannot avoid participating in instance dungeons. There are 2 types of instance dungeon participation for guilds. The first is active participation; I believe that means after a certain amount of time, the system will announce the information for instance dungeons that are opening to the guilds. The guild will have to decide if it wants to participate. If it chooses to participate, adjustments will be made to match the level of the instance dungeon and the guild’s own level.

If the instance dungeon level is higher than the guild level, then the guild will face restrictions when entering. For example, the number of people allowed to enter will be reduced. A lower levelled guild will have to endure the restriction of having lesser people when entering a higher levelled instance dungeon. The guild will be unable to field as many people as it wishes to. Additionally... if the difference in level is too high, the guild will not even be allowed to enter and not a single person would be allowed to participate.

A guild’s level is based on: Assessment of guild member’s strength, frequency of success in instance dungeons, rate of survival, completion of quests etc. These will be used to comprehensively evaluate the guild.

Theoretically speaking, the guild with higher number of masters, instance dungeon participation and success rate will have a higher level for itself.

The division for guild levels is also from E Class to S Class.

There are several advantages to being a high-levelled guild. Firstly, it can participate in high-levelled instance dungeons. In addition, it will not face any restriction in number of participants. The guild can thus send in its main powerhouses and ensure that their combat strength will not be reduced, leading to a higher rate of success.

The second advantage is... the right to not participate. When

encountering an instance dungeon of a lower level compared to the guild's, the guild may elect to be exempted. In other words, suppose that a guild is of the A Class and it encounters an instance dungeon with the difficulty level of A Class or below, the guild can then choose to not participate in the instance dungeon.

However, this exemption will reduce the level of the guild.”

Han Bi suddenly had a thought. “This could be a loophole, right?” The thick browed youngster’s face became a little glad. “This can be exploited! Theoretically speaking, an instance dungeon with a higher level of difficulty will mean a higher rate of death. Then... assuming our guild had undergone a difficult amount of grinding, the battle strength of our members will become high.

At that time, we take advantage of this right for exemption to suppress the guild level so that the guild can maintain its low level. Moreover, the guild can participate in low-levelled instance dungeons when in fact, our members already have a high level of battle strength.

Participating in a low-levelled instance dungeon with a high level of battle strength, our rate of survival will be assured!

Additionally, once the level of the guild rises high again, the right for exemption can be utilized again to reduce the guild level. That way, the level of difficulty can be maintained forever...”

The more he spoke, the more excited Han Bi became.

A helpless look was etched on Chen Xiaolian’s face. “I thought about those things as well. However... it is not feasible!”

There is a set rule displayed: Exemption cannot be used continuously!

In other words, if the right for exemption was used for the last instance, then there will be no exemption for the next time, regardless of what type of instance dungeon it may be. Participation then becomes mandatory!

Assume an A Class guild had utilized the exemption once. It is then degraded to a B Class guild... it can then no longer be exempted for the next instance dungeon.

If the difficulty level of the next instance dungeon is B Class, then they are lucky.

But, if the next instance dungeon that they are forced to participate in is of the A Class or perhaps higher...

Then, that guild which had been degraded to a B Class guild will be forced to participate in an instance dungeon with A Class difficulty, leading to a restriction in the number of participants! Under this restriction in participant number, if some key members are unable to participate, then the guild will be unable to display its full strength. Within an instance dungeon of a higher difficulty level, it is inevitable that the dangers will increase, leading to a higher rate of failure and death!

Once failure or death occurs... the guild's level will further decrease.

The guild will then become even weaker!

In addition... only high-levelled instance dungeons will give out high-levelled loots.

In low-levelled instance dungeons... we may be able to laze about. However, our loot will be low and we will be unable to greatly increase the strength of our guild. Once disaster occurs... there is no need for me to explain. I am sure you all understand.

I have checked the system before, there is an explanation within the guild's instance dungeon selection area: Every once in a while, the system will select some guilds to participate in a 'large-scale instance dungeon' event. It is one that ignores the distinction between levels!

If our strength is insufficient, then entering this world filled with masters... would be akin to a sheep delivering itself into a pack of wolves.

This system will not give us the opportunity to exploit loopholes."

"What about guild members then?" Han Bi suddenly asked. "Are there any restrictions for guild members? If being in a guild allows one to avoid being selected by the instance dungeon, then every time the guild has to participate in an instance, the Guild Leader can show benevolence to a

certain guild member. That way, that certain guild member will always be safe, right?”

“There are restrictions,” Chen Xiaolian gave a strained smile. “A guild member who did not participate in an instance dungeon twice in a row will be forced by the instance dungeon to enter the third one, disregarding the difference in level. In addition, that member will end up occupying one of the limited spots in the guild’s participating team. I doubt there will be any Guild Leader who would practice such a kind of favouritism.

Raising a wastrel, protecting that person and not letting him participate in instance dungeons. At most, that person will only be able to laze about for two times. The third time around, that person will be forced into an instance dungeon... additionally, that person will occupy one of the limited spots for participation. If the instance dungeon happens to be one that has a high level of difficulty, that would mean having one less key members in exchange for a wastrel... isn’t that act simply courting disaster?”

A lost look of resentment befell Han Bi’s face.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly let out a smile. “I feel that having this leeway is good enough. At the very least, after entering a guild, each member will have a maximum of two chances to be exempted from instance dungeons. When encountering an instance that is unsuitable or of a higher level of difficulty, one can choose to not let their guild members die a senseless death. With three opportunities, one would surely be able to get an instance dungeon with a low level of difficulty, thereby allowing the weaker guild member to have an easier time.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “In any case, the benefits from a guild far outweighs being alone. At the very least, the degree of freedom available when participating in an instance dungeon is bigger. There will also be more leeway to manoeuvre about. In contrast, when Han Bi and Soo Soo were selected, we were pushed to the cliff’s edge.

Thus, I have been thinking... if we are to consider things from a long-term perspective, it would be best for us to find and join a reliable guild

or... establish our own guild!”

Chapter 55: Return Even If I Have To Crawl

Qiao Qiao was seated at the side, embracing Soo Soo and maintaining her silence. Suddenly, she opened her mouth. "What other advantages are there in a guild?"

"We can exchange out the guild's special equipment," Chen Xiaolian laughed. "Each guild will have its own special equipment available for exchange."

What Chen Xiaolian found most satisfactory was that the guild's special equipment exchange function was something he could use. Thank the Heavens, he finally have a working form of Exchange System.

It appeared that a guild's special equipment exchange function does not lie within the restrictions faced by his castrated system!

Chen Xiaolian smiled as he continued. "However... the number of items within the guild's special exchange is small. The special exchange of 'Meteor Rock Guild' only has two purchasable items. The first is a medicine that greatly increases strength; known as 'Meteor Rock's Might', priced at 80 points.

The other is 'Meteor Rock's Protective Suit'.

As the name suggests, these two things belong solely to 'Meteor Rock Guild'.

I checked it out. The Meteor Rock Protective Suit is a B Class equipment, priced at 300 points."

Han Bi's eyes lit up. "300 points? In the personal Exchange System, a B Class protective suit is priced at 500 points!"

His expression then turned gloomy. "Unfortunately, I have too little points... in the last 72 Demons instance dungeon, I obtained a total of only 60 plus points. The difference is too big; I cannot afford to buy it."

"You won't be able to use it even if you want to," Chen Xiaolian sighed.

“The guild’s configuration will not allow us to exploit any loopholes. With such a good and inexpensive item, the guild members would want to bring them out to sell it to others to gain points.

But there is a system restriction: Guild’s special equipment, useable only by guild members. Others will be unable to utilize it.

Additionally, once the guild member leaves the guild, all the special equipment that member possess will be recovered by the system.”

Seeing everyone in the room quieting down, Chen Xiaolian clapped his hands forcefully. “All right, now we will discuss our battle tactics for this instance dungeon!”

Han Bi’s expression turned solemn; Qiao Qiao sighed and pulled out the bunny earphones that Soo Soo was wearing and brought her beside Chen Xiaolian.

Roddy blinked. “Err, do I have to listen as well?”

“En, there are matters that we need you to do. Naturally, it does not involve entering the instance dungeon. It is something else.”

Then, Chen Xiaolian lightly held onto Soo Soo. He caressed Soo Soo’s nose and smiled. “Soo Soo, tomorrow you will have to come with me to join a game event. When that happens, your big sister will not be by your side. Will you be scared?”

Soo Soo shrunk her head and glanced around at Han Bi, Roddy and Qiao Qiao. Finally, she took a deep breath and looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Oppa... I will be obedient.”

“Good, as long as you listen to me obediently, I will definitely protect you,” Chen Xiaolian gently patted Soo Soo’s mushroom like hair.

Qiao Qiao who was at the side turned her head away, wiping her tears.

“All right, now it is time to assign the tasks,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “Qiao Qiao and Roddy, the two of you are responsible for getting two cars with a full tank of gasoline. Prepare several walkie-talkies with at least two in each car. Make sure to have them fully charged!

From the moment we enter the instance dungeon, the two of you will be on standby at the two entrances situated to the south and north of the mausoleum area respectively. Qiao Qiao in the south and Roddy in the north.

Should we encounter any danger when we exit the instance dungeon, such as meeting other Awakened ones with ill intent, then we need a means of transport to quickly leave no matter which exit we take!”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian produced a map of the mausoleum area he had prepared prior to his. Using a black brush pen, he marked the two entrance positions situated south and north upon the surface of the map.

“Get cars that are fast, it would be best if you could get those with high speed. Also, it needs to be able to accommodate at least 4 people! Please do not bring a two-seater sports car!” Chen Xiaolian glanced at Qiao Qiao.

“All right!” Qiao Qiao clenched her teeth.

“Han Bi,” Chen Xiaolian looked at Han Bi. “What I am going to say next, you can refuse. Because this idea of mine is still not complete. I just want to discuss it with you.”

“En, go ahead.”

Chen Xiaolian pondered. “Originally, I was thinking of getting you to join Meteor Rock Guild with me. By the looks of it though, it is unnecessary since the instance dungeon has already selected you. Unless you die, the list of participants will not change. Thus, joining a guild holds no meaning for you... For you, there is no practical significance to joining a guild. Instead, it will only expose our relationship and identities.

My suggestion is for you to enter the instance dungeon as a solo participant. When the time comes, one of us will be moving in the light and the other in the dark within the instance dungeon. We will also be able to complement each other. In addition... I also dare not put all my trust in the Meteor Rock Guild’s people. So... it would be for the best if we are not together. Just in case something happens to one side, the other

side can come to the rescue. That way, we will not be caught in one fell swoop.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian frowned. “However... Awakened ones who enter the instance dungeon alone will face a high level of danger. You will be preyed upon by Player Guilds. Moreover, you do not have any members to act alongside you. Perhaps, the level of danger would rise even further.”

“I will accept this idea,” Han Bi nodded his head without hesitation. “If it comes to it, I will just follow that Xia Xiaolei’s example and find a place to hide.”

“All right. After we enter the instance dungeon, we will use mobile phones to keep in touch. Oh, right. Bring along a walkie-talkie. In case mobile phones cannot be used, we can use walkie-talkies to keep in touch.

In case communication devices cannot be used... we will paint special signals on the wall.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian grabbed a piece of pen and paper and wrote down a few words.

“No updates, it means there is danger, stop advancing!” Chen Xiaolian pointed to the words on the paper. “Eruption, it means I am in front, come find me quickly.”

Han Bi saw those words and could not help but let out a smile. He glanced at Chen Xiaolian, the both of them shared a tacit understanding.

Chen Xiaolian then looked at Soo Soo. “Soo Soo will follow by my side. I will bring Soo Soo together to meet up with the people from Meteor Rock Guild.”

After their discussion was completed, everyone carried with them a glum atmosphere.

Chen Xiaolian though, intentionally put on a relaxed smile. “All right, let us just consider this a real life online game. Oh, right. There is another 30 hours, right? Everyone, do not be so worried before a battle. How about we get some alcohol to drink?”

“I will go buy it.”

Roddy stood up. Han Bi too nodded and said. “I will go with you... I suddenly want to smoke.”

“You smoke?” Roddy glanced at Han Bi.

Han Bi smiled bitterly. “No. However, since I have never tried it, I feel like doing so.”

The two of them looked at each other, then they turned to look at Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo who were within the room. They smiled in a mysterious manner and then opened the door and went out.

In the room, the ones left were Qiao Qiao, Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo.

Chen Xiaolian felt the mood turning somewhat awkward. He then stood up. “I am going to go wash my face.”

He went into the washroom, turned on the water faucet and splashed the water onto his face. When he turned look at the mirror, he found that Qiao Qiao was standing behind him.

“Err...”

Chen Xiaolian turned around to see that Qiao Qiao had already softly shut the door to the washroom.

“Xiaolian,” Qiao Qiao stared directly at Chen Xiaolian’s eyes as she bit hard on her lips.

“En?” Chen Xiaolian’s face was a little blushed. The distance between the two of them had become very small. He could even feel Qiao Qiao’s breath on his face.

“Soo Soo’s safety is now in your hands,” Qiao Qiao whispered. “No matter what the outcome may be... I, Qiao Qiao owe you a life.”

“I will do everything I can to protect Soo Soo,” Chen Xiaolian forced a smile. “Besides... do not forget Soo Soo’s second personality. If something were to happen, it is still unknown who will be the one to take up the mantle of protector.”

“Her second personality is unpredictable. You should not depend on her,” Qiao Qiao shook her head. “I know, you have been treated unfairly in this whole matter. You are someone who simply does not need to participate in this instance dungeon, yet...”

Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile again. “I am not only doing it for Soo Soo. I am also doing it for Han Bi. He is someone who can be considered a friend through life and death.”

“You... be careful,” Qiao Qiao bit her lips. Her face was flushed red and her eyes flickered. “You must return alive!”

“En?” Chen Xiaolian was no fool. Seeing Queen Qiao’s rather peculiar gaze, he suddenly laughed. In order to lighten up the mood, he deliberately laughed. “Queen Qiao, could it be that by saving you two those few times, I have moved your heart? You are not thinking about giving your body as payment, are you?”

After hearing those words, Qiao Qiao’s body trembled.

Her beautiful pair of eyes narrowed and stared at Chen Xiaolian, causing him to feel frightened.

“You have saved us three times now. First was in the train. Second when we were in the fields,” Qiao Qiao spoke slowly. “Your participation in this instance dungeon is the third. But, I only have one life. As I said, my life is yours. If you really want that... then I will give myself to you!”

“{Nani}?” Chen Xiaolian stared with wide opened eyes.

“I am not trying to use sex to deceive you to protect my sister,” Qiao Qiao slowly said. “Although it has only been a few days, I already understand what kind of person you are. I know, even if I do not do this, you will still do everything possible to save her. I...”

After saying said, Qiao Qiao’s lips suddenly quivered. She abruptly inhaled and moved in...

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes remained wide open as he watched Qiao Qiao closing in. A spark blossomed upon his lips – this feeling, so soft...

Unfortunately, before Chen Xiaolian could relish the feeling, Qiao Qiao had quickly pulled away.

“You... just now... that is...” Chen Xiaolian’s face was flushed red as he became somewhat paralyzed.

Qiao Qiao’s face glowed red. “You... you still don’t understand?”

“Err... I understood a little, but I cannot be certain,” Chen Xiaolian smiled awkwardly, then pointed to himself before pointing to Qiao Qiao. “Me? You?”

Qiao Qiao nodded.

“You... really like me?” Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt a rather sweet feeling budding within his heart. “When did it begin?”

“Since we got on the worn out bicycle. Back then, you did not forget to leave a few hundred yuan. I felt that you are someone reliable!” Qiao Qiao stared at Chen Xiaolian. “Return alive! You must return alive! Promise me!”

Chen Xiaolian’s virgin heart pounded vigorously!

Damn, after living for eighteen years, I actually managed to experience a confession from a beauty?

At that moment, he felt his entire body overflowing with strength!

“Do not worry! I will return even if I have to crawl my way back!”

Chen Xiaolian has been roused!

He looked at Qiao Qiao and a desire to hug her welled up. However, he felt hesitant; he whispered. “I... earlier, that kiss...”

“I heard from Roddy, you have never had a girlfriend. I thought... you are about to go risk your life, you cannot do that without having your virgin kiss,” Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth.

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily rendered senseless...

Virgin kiss?

Err... I recall having given that to the Japanese flight attendant back in

the first instance dungeon?

However... only someone with a problem with his head will speak about that matter now!

“That... my virgin kiss is no more now, but... my virginity is still intact... don't you think you should also...”

“Bastard!”

“Aiya! If it is not possible then just say no. I was just making a suggestion! Do not hit me! Aiya, why are you biting!”

In the bathroom, the two of them threw a ruckus for a while. Finally, Chen Xiaolian held Qiao Qiao in an embrace and she stopped struggling. Qiao Qiao squinted her eyes and leaned onto Chen Xiaolian's shoulder. Chen Xiaolian however, did not do anything out of line.

“Xiaolian, do you have any wish?”

“Hey... those are some ill-omened words you are saying,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly.

“Just tell me, do you have any wish,” Qiao Qiao asked.

“Err... do you know of the highest storeyed building with purple coloured top in the city we live in?”

“I know,” Qiao Qiao glanced at Chen Xiaolian.

“A few years ago, I passed by that place for the first time. Back then, I thought to myself: If I ever become filthy rich, I will buy up the highest level!”

Qiao Qiao glanced at Chen Xiaolian. “Very well! Return alive and I will buy up the highest level for you!”

“Err, can you not be so ostentatious with your money, beautiful lady?” Chen Xiaolian let out another bitter smile. I feel as though I am being supported (duang~) by you . However, I now have a different wish. I feel that buying up the highest floor holds no meaning. If I return alive... I will stand at the highest level and pee down!”

1 No updates = ‘斷更’, pinyin: ‘duàn gèng’. A term used in Qidian and other novel sites to indicate a novel that is no longer updated. It could be either short term (one or two days) or forever.

Eruption = ‘爆发’, pinyin: ‘bàofā’. This term is often used by Dancing (Author) when he updates more than 1 chapter a day.

2 ‘Giving body as payment’ = ‘以身相许’, pinyin: ‘yǐ shēn xiāng xǔ’. A term used in old times for a female who had received a rather considerable favour (being saved etc.) and repays it by marrying or giving herself to the benefactor.

3 ‘Duang~’ is a word that has no meaning in Chinese but became highly popular around 2015 in China thanks to Jackie Chan, a famous action star. In 2004, he shot an advertisement for a shampoo.

His words were then edited to: “When I first learnt that I was to shoot a shampoo ad, the truth was, I had rejected it. I told the director, I reject, because, truthfully, I don’t have hair... director told me: after the shoot, add special effects, hair becomes very black, very shiny, very soft... after 1 month of adding in special effects, my hair DUANG – later on I learnt that the shampoo is also fake, made from chemical ingredients. As for the current me, I still add special effects every day, I add a lot of special effects, so my hair DUANG – DUANG – DUANG – my hair is dark black and thick, because I added special effects...” [Source: Baidu]

Those edited words were then synchronized with the song ‘My Skateboard Shoes’, raw: ‘我的滑板鞋’ by Joseeh Pumanlon/ ‘庞麦郎’. It became a huge hit.

Chapter 56: We Have Moral Integrity

“Are you afraid?”

Standing at the fire escape staircase, Roddy stood facing Han Bi. Both of them were holding onto a cigarette in their hands. Roddy looked at Han Bi as he asked in a serious tone.

Han Bi thought about it, then raised the cigarette in his hand. “Truth be told, I don’t smoke.”

“That means, you are afraid?”

“En,” Han Bi nodded. “From the moment I received the prompt stating that I have been selected by the instance dungeon, I have been unable to feel relaxed at all.” Han Bi vigorously took a drag from the cigarette. “So, I thought, if I am to die, I would like to know how smoking a cigarette feels like before dying.”

“And?”

Han Bi smiled bitterly. “It smells terrible.” He stubbed the cigarette and looked at Roddy. “Hey, I hear that after an Awakened one like me dies, I will be refreshed by the system and returned to a normal person. Then...”

“If you end up being refreshed...” Roddy let out a strained smile. “I will definitely go to your school to find you and gift you with a huge sum of money. Didn’t you like the newest PS4? When the time comes, I will gift one to you.”

“It is better if you do not,” Han Bi shook his head. “If I do get refreshed... you all, don’t come find me. Just let the refreshed Han Bi be at ease and live the life of an ordinary person.”

Roddy was momentarily stunned and he looked at the thick browed youngster seriously.

After a while, Han Bi laughed. “What do you think Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao are doing at this moment?”

“En...” Roddy kneaded his chin. “If they are not pa pa pa-ing, then they

are kissing intimately . However, Soo Soo is also in the room, so I believe it should be the latter.”

“Damn it, you are a real scum.”

“Hahahaha.”

...

That night, those young adults were unable to sleep peacefully.

At daybreak, Chen Xiaolian got up first and proceeded to carefully reassess all the plans he made. After a shower, he made a cup of rich coffee and gulped it down as he ate a few pieces of bread.

There was less than 20 hours left.

Chen Xiaolian went to Qiao Qiao's room to see that Qiao Qiao was all ready to set out. She looked at Chen Xiaolian. Taking a deep breath, she hugged him before turning to head out.

Today, Qiao Qiao shall be using the daytime to acquire the cars and complete the other preparations. Roddy will be going with her.

Chen Xiaolian brought Soo Soo downstairs to have breakfast. Observing the hotel's dining hall, he saw that a high number of the guests were wearing school uniforms. These people were here for the aircraft model competition.

He saw that Han Bi was within the mix.

Chen Xiaolian also noted that the one wearing sunglasses, the fellow known as Nangong was also having his breakfast. Beside him were his two comrades.

He did not see Qiu Yun. Who knows where he was.

During the day, Chen Xiaolian brought Soo Soo with him and joined the group of participants for the aircraft model competition. They entered the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang and explored the terrain.

There was not anything complicated when it came to the terrain.

They went in the Qin Mountain range where a continuous number of

mountains were spread out as far as their eyes could see. The open area at the foot of the mountains was an artificially constructed plain of grass. There was also a lake there.

Chen Xiaolian observed a good number of students flying remote controlled aircraft models as they stood upon the grassy plains; remote controlled boats were placed by the side of the lake.

Holding on to Soo Soo's hand, he moved into the crowd and carefully observed his surroundings.

Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. As implied by the name, it was the mausoleum of the First Emperor in history.

The mausoleum of history's First Emperor has yet to be completely excavated. At the current, only a small part of it was unearthed. According to the publicized information that Chen Xiaolian had seen, the part unearthed may be only a very small part – judging from the high level of ambition that history's First Emperor has, the scale of his mausoleum would likely exceed everyone's expectation.

The terracotta warriors currently on display in Shaanxi City were but the burial items within one or two pits within the mausoleum.

After buying a big cotton candy for Soo Soo from the shops within the scenic area, Chen Xiaolian moved deeper into the Mausoleum Area – as he moved forward he found that the place was restricted and there were 'No Visitor' signs in addition to fences.

Next to it is an exhibition hall where the unearthed cultural relics were exhibited as well as some historical literature regarding the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang.

Some schools had organized a spring tour and their group were here to visit. Chen Xiaolian brought Soo Soo with him as he walked one round through the place. Feeling that there was nothing else to see, he took Soo Soo back to the hotel.

It was already evening by the time they returned to their room. Chen Xiaolian carried with him a backpack containing some mineral water,

items from first-aid kits, three walkie-talkies, two Swiss Army knives, windproof lighter, hardtack biscuits and energy bars.

Checking the time, Chen Xiaolian saw that the appointed hour with Qiu Yun has arrived. He brought Soo Soo to Qiu Yun's room.

Seeing Chen Xiaolian's arrival did not cause any change in Qiu Yun's expression. Qiu Yun only gave an extra glance at Soo Soo who was behind Chen Xiaolian. "This is the friend that you want to protect?"

"Yes," Chen Xiaolian nodded.

Qiu Yun did not say anything. He picked up the lighter that was on the table and placed it into his pocket. "Let us go."

Chen Xiaolian noted that Qiu Yun did not carry any backpack. Both of Qiu Yun's hands were stuffed into his trousers' pockets as he led Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo out of the hotel.

Far away, Nangong who was still wearing sunglasses stood in the parking lot. He turned and gave a glance at their direction before entering an SUV and left.

"Conventionally speaking, the Awakened ones will first enter the instance dungeon. The system will delay the time for Players' arrival for a short time. This is a game and a hunt," Qiu Yun lightly said. "The instance dungeon may have some restrictions. For example, a myth type of instance dungeon will normally restrict technology type of abilities and equipment. Of course, if we consider the background story of the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, I feel that this instance dungeon should be inclined towards the myth type. Mechanical types and technology types will be restricted. However..."

After saying that, Qiu Yun suddenly extended his hand. A gun had appeared at an unknown moment within his palm, which he then gave to Chen Xiaolian. "Keep it for self-defence. Basic technology type will not be restricted. In a fight where cold weapons are involved, firearms will still be useful against weak mobs."

Qiu Yun gave Chen Xiaolian 4 bullet clips.

“Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang... it is not going to make us enter the catacombs, is it? ... will there be things like white haired zombies or ghouls?”

“Hell if I know,” Qiu Yun gave a faint smile. “After entering, remember this one thing. With the exception of our own people, others can be killed regardless if they be human or monster!”

The word ‘kill’ caused Chen Xiaolian’s heart to become heavy.

He found that Qiu Yun’s tone was very cold. It was an emotionless type of coldness.

...

The sky had turned completely dark.

The three of them entered the mausoleum area from the south gate. When they reached the No Visitors zone, they blatantly upended the enclosing walls. Then, they moved in to the mountain lands.

When there was less than six hours remaining to the opening of the instance dungeon, a prompt appeared in the system.

[Prompt: Entry point for instance dungeon numbered V587 issued. There are a total of 16 of these entry points. Participants are to choose an entry point for the instance dungeon according to their location].

Tens of bright dots immediately appeared upon the surface of the radar. They were all flashing as they each transformed into a circle of light.

Chen Xiaolian observed that the circle of light closest to him was about 600 metres to the front and left of his position.

On the way...

“After the instance dungeon begins... what would happen if an ordinary person enters the area?” Chen Xiaolian asked in a casual tone.

Qiu Yun glanced at him. “Once the instance dungeon begins, the system will automatically isolate the instance dungeon’s area. You can consider it as having the instance dungeon’s area detached out from this world. After the instance dungeon is completed, it will be attached back.”

“Then what about time...”

“The concept of time becomes different,” Qiu Yun shook his head. “In such a kind of detachment, the flow of time for the outside world may only be a few seconds, or perhaps even just a blink of an eye. After we enter the instance dungeon, we may stay inside for a few hours or even a few days. However, when we exit we will find that only one second has passed in the outside world... these are all possible,” Qiu Yun laughed. “All right, that concludes the questions for newbies. From now on, keep your mind vigilant. Whether or not you survive, that will depend on your strength and your mind. Naturally, your luck is also important.”

In the night of early spring, the vegetation within the Qin Mountains remained of a withered and mournful yellow colour. “Ka ka” sounds were emitted when their feet stepped upon the withered branches.

Climbing up the mountains was no problem for Chen Xiaolian whose body have already been strengthened. Qiu Yun too, faced no difficulty in the climb. Soo Soo, however, started gasping non-stop after a while. Chen Xiaolian quickly carried her upon his back.

When they arrived at the entry point, they found a waterfall between the mountains. It flowed down to form a stream.

The scale of the waterfall was small; the height between its top and its bottom was a mere 3 to 5 metres making it resemble a water curtain.

Qiu Yun glanced at the coordinates within the radar. “It should be behind that water curtain.”

The three of them stood behind some rocks next to the stream as they listened to the rustling sounds of the swaying branches brought over by the night winds.

1 hour and 30 minutes remaining.

It was already 3 o'clock in the morning.

According to the radar display, there were other Awakened ones in the vicinity moving closer towards them. This inevitably caused Chen Xiaolian to feel anxious.

Qiu Yun on the other hand maintained a relaxed attitude. He even lit himself a cigarette and slowly took a drag from it.

“Someone is coming, there is a distance of less than 200 metres,” Chen Xiaolian clenched his fist. “We...”

“We do not need to do anything,” Qiu Yun said indifferently. “Those who come are all Awakened ones who have been selected to enter the instance dungeon. As of now, there is only slightly more than 1 hours’ time left to enter the instance dungeon. Thus, everyone will try to avoid taking action or cause a confrontation in order to not lose combat strength before the instance. En... but we still need to be careful. Other circles of guilds may have received information regarding this instance dungeon. They might come over to take advantage of the situation and attempt to rob others. This has happened before.”

Just as he had finished speaking, they saw two black figures running out from beside the stream. They were running towards the water curtain.

The two of them were positioned with one at the front and one at the back. Even within the darkness, it was obvious that they were feeling nervous.

“Newbies,” Qiu Yun squinted his eyes. “Those who run out of patience are all newbies.”

After that, they saw one of the black figures rush into the waterfall curtain, extending his head into the water before pulling back immediately. The figure complained. “There is nothing at all.”

The other one said. “It is not time yet. It is probably not opened yet.”

As they talked, they moved to the side. Suddenly, a piercing sound was heard!

Xiu!

A sharp arrow flew out from the forests, striking one of the black clothed figures squarely in the neck! The arrow was both fast and accurate and it directly pierced that person’s neck!

The pitiful Awakened one did not even have the chance to scream out. His eyes bulged out widely and he fell face first into the water!

The other person became frightened. He screamed out and a few metal shields magically appeared around his body. They then slowly rotated in a circle around his body.

“Eh? Those are Magical Shield Armour. This skill is not bad. A pity he does not know how to use it. Magical Shield Armour is a very good form of defence against magic, but against physical attacks, it is somewhat lacking,” Qiu Yun flicked away some cigarette ashes.

As expected, another sharp arrow flew out from within the forests just as the newbie had summoned out his rotating shields!

This time, the arrow was deflected by the shield. The newbie then shouted loudly; he identified the origin point of the arrow and charged towards the riverbank in that direction. However, he only managed to move several paces forward. Due to the newbie having to wade through the waters, his movements could not be executed with ease. A “hong” sound was heard and several axes flew out from the riverbank!

One of the shields encircling the newbie was smashed apart and an axe hacked down onto the newbie’s head. The newbie then fell down backwards...

Chen Xiaolian looked at the axes that were thrown out from the other side. Another one of the axe that was shot out had directly split apart a piece of rock beside the stream. He could not help but be left breathless. “What a powerful strength!”

Someone then moved out from the other side of the forest.

This person has a thin and small frame. His hands were holding onto a white flag. He emerged from the cluster of trees and first stood upon the riverbank, turning about before finally entering the stream. He went towards the 2 floating corpses and quickly picked up some items from the waters. He then made a hand cupping motion towards all 4 sides before jumping out and disappearing into the forest.

“Killing newbies... heng,” Qiu Yun spoke with disdain. “What good items can be obtained by killing newbies? These fellows are falling lower and lower.”

Observing the whole thing, Chen Xiaolian felt his scalp going numb. He asked in a low tone. “Do Awakened ones always kill one another like this?”

“Not all of them are like this,” Qiu Yun said in a somewhat frustrated tone. “People have their own ideals; some treat other Awakened ones as cattle, sheep or tough competitors.”

“However... shouldn’t Awakened ones unite together to fight against the Players?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“It is as I have said, people have their own ideals. The same rice feeds a hundred types of people ,” Qiu Yun sneered. “In the pursuit of benefits and strength, some people would be willing to do anything. Just consider it, those Players will only arrive when an instance dungeon opens. So, what should an Awakened one do to get stronger during normal days? Some people would then target their own kind, the Awakened ones. Killing others to loot equipment and medicine... those will help save up on a lot of points.

These kinds of occurrences are the same everywhere. There may be acts of murder amongst Awakened ones, but how often do the Players come together as an indivisible whole?”

After saying that, Qiu Yun patted Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder. “However, these are all the things that only third-rate guilds and below will do. Some of the decent big guilds will have some principle and integrity.”

1 ‘Pa pa pa’ = lovemaking session.

2 ‘The same rice feeds a hundred types of people’ = ‘一样米养白样人’, pinyin: ‘yī yàng mǐ yǎng bái yàng rén’. Meaning: The meals eaten can be the same, but the character produced will still be widely varied.

Chapter 57: Caverns

Chen Xiaolian has always been an open-minded person. That was why he was able to accept Qiu Yun's explanation.

However, he still had one question:

"If it is as you said, that acts of murder and pillaging occurs between Awakened ones, then how are we to safely enter the instance dungeon?"

Facing this question, Qiu Yun gave a strange answer. "Have you ever seen how wild beasts demarcate their territories?"

"Eh?"

Qiu Yun suddenly smiled. "How much more time is left?"

"Less than 1 hour."

"It is about time," The corners of Qiu Yun's mouth were turned upwards. He then swaggered out from the cluster of trees with both his hands placed inside his trousers' pockets and waded into the centre position of the stream.

Chen Xiaolian was stunned only to see Qiu Yun turning his head to face him and laughed out.

It was presently before dawn. A faint moonlight fell down from the skies and landed upon Qiu Yun's face. His gaunt face carried with it a trace of an indifferent smile. For some unknown reason, Chen Xiaolian felt that Qiu Yun's smile contained a peculiar charm: confidence, profundity, calmness and... an indescribable aura of dominance!

"Are you still not coming over?"

Hearing those words, Chen Xiaolian could not stop himself and took a step forward. Then, he recollected himself and quickly pulled Soo Soo along as he moved forward.

...

Qiu Yun brazenly walked to the centre position of the stream and even chose to stand upon a piece of rock beneath the waterfall. He stood just

like that upon the bare piece of rock.

Within the darkness, it was unknown how many pair of eyes were directed towards him. From the radar, Chen Xiaolian could see that there were at least 7 to 8 green dots existing within the vicinity of the stream.

Qiu Yun stood upon the piece of rock and produced a cigarette, which he lit up. After taking a puff, he turned to glance at the surroundings of the stream with his star-like pair of clear eyes. After that, this Guild Leader opened his mouth.

“Meteor Rock Guild’s Qiu Yun is here. Those who do not wish to die, scram!”

The final word issued from his mouth, “scram” was akin to an explosive thunder rumbling through spring!

When it reached Chen Xiaolian’s ears, he felt his entire body being shaken and his mind was sent spiralling for an instant!

At that moment, the sight of Qiu Yun standing at the central position with a cold face and sharp eyes gave birth to an aura of majesty.

It was as though the night had, at that moment frozen in silence and stillness...

After over 10 minutes...

Although none of those beside the stream said anything earlier, Chen Xiaolian was visited by an illusory feeling: The current stillness was a deterrence created by Qiu Yun!

The green dots on the radar retreated one by one!

Rustling sounds of “sha sha” was emitted from the forests as the green dots retreated one by one. They left the stream and moved far away...

When wild beasts occupy a place, a natural demarcation of territory will occur!

Chen Xiaolian instantly understood the meaning of Qiu Yun’s words from back then!

It seems, I may have hugged onto an extraordinary thigh...

...

1 hours' time. It cannot be described as long and yet it can also not be described as short. After Qiu Yun stood in the middle of the stream, all the Awakened ones who had originally been hiding in the forests by the riverbank retreated. The distance between the other Awakened ones and the stream had finally made the situation safe enough. Even the nearest one to them had a distance of around 200 to 300 metres between them.

Chen Xiaolian stood beside Qiu Yun. He was standing on another piece of rock that had been rendered smooth by the stream and waterfall curtain. He held Soo Soo with one hand and tightened his fist on the other while staring at Qiu Yun. He simply looked at Qiu Yun as Qiu Yun took one puff after another of his cigarette.

Qiu Yun did not look at him. Instead, he raised his head to look at the night sky, the moon and the stars.

One minute after another ticked by. Then, when the countdown timer of the system finally reached zero...

Qiu Yun then bent down his head as he stopped looking at the skies. "It is time, are you ready?"

"... ready," Chen Xiaolian's heart was suddenly filled with a glimmer of excitement.

Indeed, it was not fear or apprehension, but excitement!

The atmosphere of dominance and confidence displayed by Qiu Yun had seemingly infected Chen Xiaolian.

...

After probing into the waterfall curtain, a scene that Chen Xiaolian was familiar with played out upon the stonewall that was originally behind the curtain of water...

The surface of the stonewall seemingly melted and transformed into a passage. At the entrance of the passage was a green screen of light.

Qiu Yun headed in first. The green screen of light swept over his body. Next, Chen Xiaolian pulled Soo Soo with him as he followed Qiu Yun.

Within the passage, water vapour spread out through every surface, turning the air damp and depressive.

The ground was also muddy and slippery. But the discovery that surprised Chen Xiaolian most was that the farther in he went, the bigger the space became. The sounds of rushing water could faintly be heard coming from below the mountain cave.

The walls and the area inside the caves were filled with a faint light emitted from dancing fireflies. Soo Soo appeared to be a little fearful and she tightly gripped onto Chen Xiaolian's hand. Chen Xiaolian smiled; he extended his hand to pull the hood attached to her clothes over her head.

The cave came to an end and a wide underground river appeared before their eyes.

The mountain walls were smooth and stalactites hung down from the ceiling. The underground river was seemingly lifeless, depressive and somewhat scary.

Gazing forward, they saw that the river flowed in a winding manner and that there was no end in sight. Occasionally, the rustling sounds of wind could be heard.

At the location where the river began, several small boats were laid beside the underground riverbank!

This brought a huge amount of surprise to Chen Xiaolian.

The reason for that was that he had extended his hands to examine it and found that the small boats were not made from wood... reflecting on his discovery, he realized that it was only natural. If they were made from wood, then they would have long since rotted away within this underground cave.

When he extended his hand out to feel it, he felt a cold firmness, just like those from iron ores!

“It is ironwood,” Qiu Yun gave a faint smile. “Come help, push the boat to the river.”

The ironwood boat was shaped like a leaf; both its ends were sharp points while its middle area was stacked. In each of the boats were several oars.

Chen Xiaolian and Qiu Yun worked together to push an ironwood boat into the river. Qiu Yun then stepped first into the ironwood boat, seating himself upon the front bow area. Chen Xiaolian held Soo Soo and jumped on board. He then let Soo Soo sit in the middle while he sat upon the back stern area.

“Paddle forward,” Qiu Yun handed an oar to Chen Xiaolian. “No matter what you see or what happens, do not panic.”

...

The underground cavern was clearly a standard landscape seen in Karst topography. Chen Xiaolian had once seen this landscape within a ‘National Geographic Magazine’ that was discussing that topic.

The underground river twisted and turned and the cavern itself has many passageways connected to it. It was unknown just how many entrances and exits there were inside, making it resemble a maze.

Both of them paddled and moved the boat forward through the underground river at a slow pace. Truth be told, it did not take much effort – the underground river has its own flow of water. The surging undercurrents propelled the ironwood boat forward in a predetermined direction. The oars were only used to move the boat away from any incoming rocks and reposition the boat if it were to be forced off its angle due to surging water currents.

The ironwood boat moved forward for roughly one quarter of an hour and Chen Xiaolian could feel the water currents becoming increasingly stronger. In addition, it had become apparent that they were moving downwards and the difference in height between the top and bottom also gradually became obvious.

Within the cavern, faint fluorescent illumination would still flash out occasionally. However, the light had become too weak. For the most part, their surroundings have now become pitch black to where they would not be able to even see the fingers on their outstretched hands.

Qiu Yun produced a torch from nowhere and tied it up upon the bow with a rope. This Guild Leader had not spoken a single word since entering the boat, entering a heavy state of silence...

Suddenly... the ironwood boat moved through the river and entered a wide-open cavern area. Qiu Yun abruptly raised one hand and said in a low tone. "Careful! Something is not right at the front!"

He swiftly thrust down the oar into the water forcefully. The oar that has roughly the same height as an average person was directly pierced into the underground riverbed. The ironwood boat immediately came to a stop. Under the rushing surge of water currents, the body of the boat floated horizontally upon the centre position of the underground river.

Chen Xiaolian felt a little nervous. Just as he was about to speak up, he saw Qiu Yun pointing at something at the front, whispering. "Look!"

At the moment, they had reached a point on the underground river where the surrounding terrain had opened up significantly. On both sides of the river, there were flat rocky banks below the mountain walls. One could occasionally catch a glimpse of something that was black in colour that resembled withered vines sliding down from the rocky ceiling.

It appeared as though a black curtain has been hung over the mountain walls.

Qiu Yun's finger was pointed at the rocky banks.

In the beginning, Chen Xiaolian was unable to see it clearly. After squinting his eyes to carefully examine the place, his entire body hairs stood on end!

Upon the pitch black bank by the river were something resembling pieces of bulging rocks. It appeared to be a black coloured disc. However, a careful look revealed that those pieces of bulging rocks were slowly

squirming! The squirming rate was extremely low and anything less than a careful examination would cause one to miss it!

After watching it carefully, he was able to discern that those were shockingly... some kind of animal with flexible bodies resembling snakes. They coiled their bodies to form the shape of a circle, like those of a mosquito coil!

Turning around, he saw that both sides of the river's rocky banks were densely packed with those creatures and their numbers were simply uncountable!

1 'Hugging someone's thigh' means to rely on someone with a superior position to gain benefits. Raw: '抱大腿', pinyin: 'bào dà tuǐ'.

Chapter 58: Shot While Lying Down?

Under Chen Xiaolian's observation, the bodies of those coiled up snakes were as thick as a person's arm. However, it appeared to be in a dormant state. Its eyes were closed and it would occasionally squirm its body. Without a watchful eye, one could easily mistake it for a stone.

The sight of these creatures was simply terrifying. Qiu Yun himself seemed to have fallen into a trance for nearly one full minute before giving out a light sigh. "This time's instance dungeon might well be far more difficult than I had expected."

He turned around to glance at Chen Xiaolian. "Next, you and I will have to work together. We will control the ironwood boat so that it will move forward along this river and cross through this cavern... the water currents will disrupt the direction of our ironwood boat. If the boat is being pushed to the riverbank side, use the oar to keep the boat away from the side. Pay attention and make sure that you do not touch those things when paddling with your oar! Always, always keep in mind! Ensure that the boat does not get washed up the bank and everything will be all right!"

Chen Xiaolian snorted. "What are those things? Are they snakes?"

"Snakes?" Qiu Yun thought about it before smiling. "Yes, and no. They should be the hatchlings of a Zombie Wurm."

Zombie Wurm?

That does not sound like a good thing at all!

"Zombie Wurm, supposedly it is a descendant of a Scaled Dragon. However, it was brought in to be buried together with Qin Shi Huang after his death. There, it was turned into a zombie guardian for the mausoleum. It feeds on the deathly aura to extend its existence. This creature is very tough; it would be for the best that we do not provoke it. Provoking one would cause the entire group to come over. In addition... these are all just hatchlings. If the big one gets enticed over, things would likely end badly."

After saying that, Qiu Yun exhaled and turned to glance at Chen Xiaolian. “Understand? If you understand, then prepare to move forward.”

Control the ironwood boat to move forward without bumping into the riverbanks on either side of the underground river sounded easy. However, putting it into action proved to be far more difficult than expected!

Under the surging undercurrents of the underground river, the ironwood boat became no different from a disobedient child. Despite moving in a generally forward direction, it would still sway about uncontrollably. With Qiu Yun in the front and Chen Xiaolian in the back, the both of them utilized the oars to carefully control the boat. During the few times when the boat was about to bump onto the riverbank, they immediately used the oar to halt that movement and push the ironwood boat away.

Such was the case throughout the way. After a hundred or so metres of doing so, Chen Xiaolian was tired to the point of gasping – mainly due to being anxious!

Looking at the nearby riverbank, he could see that the huddling Zombie Wyrms had covered the entire ground. The sight caused him to become fearful.

As they were halfway through the cavern, a sound came from behind!

An ironwood boat caught up to them from behind! Sitting on the boat was around 4 to 5 people. The bow of their boat was equipped with a searchlight and a ray of illumination swept over the area.

That was not all, the ironwood boat’s speed was abnormally fast and a droning “weng weng” sound could be heard emitting out from it. After looking at it for a while, Chen Xiaolian was able to discern that these people had equipped a motor on the stern of the ironwood boat!

They transformed the ironwood boat into a motorboat, allowing them to ride the wind and break the waves of the underground river, moving at high speed.

Qiu Yun’s face changed and he cursed out in a low tone. “Idiotic harbingers of calamity!”

He abruptly cried out to Chen Xiaolian. "Quick! We must leave this place quickly! These idiots will be the death of us!"

Unfortunately, it was too late!

The ironwood motorboat charged into the cavern and the loud droning sound coming off the motor echoed back and forth within the enclosed cavern. Under the enclosed effect, the sound became an ear shaking noise!

Chen Xiaolian was able to notice that the Zombie Wurm hatchlings that were on both sides of the rocky riverbank had been seemingly awakened from deep slumber. Their bodies became uncoiled and they slithered down into the river one after another...

The motorboat behind them had already caught up to them. Catching sight of Qiu Yun and Chen Xiaolian at the front, they slowed down. An Awakened one with a strapping figure called out loudly from the bow side. "Meteor Rock Guild?"

This man's words contained a deep and powerful voice. However, Chen Xiaolian could see that he is a blond Caucasian man.

"These brainless foreign devils," Qiu Yun swore, ignoring him and quickly paddled the boat forward.

"My friend from Meteor Rock Guild, why are you not saying anything?"

The blond haired foreigner's tone was obviously filled with traces of arrogance. "I have long since heard of Guild Leader Qiu Yun of the Meteor Rock Guild. Since we have the opportunity to meet today, why aren't you willing to greet us? Let us be friends."

"This senior never make friends with the dead," Qiu Yun gave a grim smile, his hands did not stop moving at all.

"Hahaha! Guild Leader Qiu Yun, it appears that your preparation is insufficient. How about it? I have a spare motor here. If you want, I can loan it to you."

Chen Xiaolian anxiously returned their stare, but was horrified to find

that there were tens of faint shadows secretly moving at an incredible speed towards the motorboat from underwater!

Chen Xiaolian was hesitant as to whether or not he should speak up to warn the other party when Qiu Yun instantly shouted out. “Move quickly!”

Raising the oars, he struggled to paddle forward!

The Caucasian man behind broke out in laughter. Suddenly, a water arrow shot out from the water surface flying towards his face!

This fellow’s reaction was fast and he extended his hand to grab onto it. He successfully caught it with his hand, only to scream out miserably in an instant!

His hand held onto the body of a snake like Zombie Wyrms! However, one could easily imagine the consequences of holding on to a snake!

The snake’s body immediately wrapped itself around his arms. Then, opening its mouth, it bit down on his palms!

Chen Xiaolian witnessed the Caucasian man’s palm turning black in an instant. A mass of black air spread upwards and the Caucasian man’s arm withered down at a visible rate!

It was as though some kind of power was rapidly eroding his flesh and bones!

Seeing all these, Chen Xiaolian’s heart broke out with cold sweat. He quickly poured all his strength into speeding up his paddling motions!

The miserable screams from behind did not cease as even more ‘water arrows’ flew out from the river surface. The sounds of “pi pi pa pa” could be heard as they landed on the boat. It was unknown just how many of the Zombie Wyrms managed to land upon the small motorboat.

The team of Awakened ones were not weak and some had already pulled out their weapon to deflect and hack about. However, how much manoeuvring and dodging space was available in that small boat? Following a few cries of surprise, a “ptong” sound could be heard as

someone fell into the water!

One of the Awakened ones struggled in the water but several Zombie Wyrms that were within the water had already wrapped themselves around him. Traces of blood appeared in the waters surrounding that person...

After being entangled by two Zombie Wyrms, an Awakened one who was on the motorboat roared and flames burst out from his entire body. Clearly, he had activated a certain type of skill.

The two Zombie Wyrms wrapped around his body were immediately burnt to ashes – it appeared that these creatures were weak against fire.

However, to set one's entire body aflame within the small space afforded by the motorboat, how would the others survive?

Due to the flames, a companion of his ended up being burnt and he miserably screamed before jumping into the river.

The underground river was not too deep. After jumping into the water, that person who had good swimming skills floated up to the water surface. At that instant though, he saw countless faint shadows charging towards him from under the water! The man let out several wretched cries as the surrounding waters became dyed in red! His eyes rolled over and he sank deep into the waters. The waters flowed into his mouth and he could no longer utter anything anymore...

Chen Xiaolian and Qiu Yun were in the midst of exerting all their might to paddle the boat forward when Chen Xiaolian's hands trembled!

He saw with clarity as a huge black shadow moved at high speed across their ironwood boat from below!

The size of this shadow was staggeringly huge!

"Guild Leader!"

"I see it! Move quickly! They have awakened a big fellow," Qiu Yun swore angrily. "Zombie Wyrms are highly sensitive to blood. Once they catch the scent of blood, more will be attracted over!"

Boom!

A loud noise came over from behind!

Chen Xiaolian turned over to see a gigantic shuttle shaped head emerging from the surface of the water!

Indeed! It was only the head!

The size of the head was as big as a door!

He only managed to catch a glance at it. However, Chen Xiaolian was able to clearly see that upon the snake like head, there were two horn like protrusions!

The creature opened its mouth wide and in an instant bit down on one third of the ironwood boat! Even the Caucasian man who was still at the bow area of the boat was devoured by that one bite!

Then, the huge dragon like wyrm's head sank into the water. Its humongous body threshed about and a black shadow could be seen emerging and submerging. Soon, both the motorboat and its passengers had sunk into the water...

The Awakened one whose entire body was emitting flames had the flames extinguished by the water. In his hands were a shank and a big axe. He flopped around in the water only to suddenly have his body fly up into the skies. It turned out that he was head-butted up by the dragon like wyrm. The wyrm raised its head and stretched opened its mouth to welcome the falling Awakened one. The Awakened one fell right into the wyrm's mouth and he cried out in misery! Half his body had fallen into the wyrm's mouth and only his upper half remained on the outside. Shouting wretchedly, he tried using his axe to create a foothold upon the mouth area of the wyrm as he struggled with all his might to avoid being completely devoured!

However...

The wyrm violently snapped its jaws shut!

With a "kacha" sound, a flower of blood blossomed and a severed arm

holding onto an axe flew out...

Before Chen Xiaolian and Qiu Yun's eyes, the bloody severed arm that held onto the axe, flew in an arc across the cavern. Then...

DUANG and it fell onto the ironwood boat where Chen Xiaolian was at . It fell right before Chen Xiaolian. In fact, the severed arm also struck Chen Xiaolian once on his shoulders, spraying him with blood!

"Da-Damn it!"

Chen Xiaolian felt his scalp on the verge of exploding.

At the same time, countless Zombie Wurm hatchlings that were situated on the riverbank around Chen Xiaolian's location reacted. Seemingly enticed by the scent of blood, they raised their head, opened their mouths and hissed. Then, they slithered down into the river and moved towards him!

In the back, the humongous Zombie Wurm suddenly raised its head and opened its big and bloody mouth. Its long and bloody tongue turned around for a while before it abruptly plunged into the river. Its gigantic body thrashed about again on the surface of the river. Additionally... judging by the shadow evident from below the water surface, it was headed quickly towards Chen Xiaolian and Qiu Yun, causing the water surface to undulate apart in its wake!

"Damn it! I got shot while lying down!"

1 'DUANG'. As explained in Chapter 55, the word DUANG became so popular, it became used for everything from sound effect, happiness, sadness, anger etc.

2 'Getting shot while lying down' is a popular internet phrase in China. It means that despite not having provoked others, one still ends up being attacked (usually verbally) by others.

Chapter 59: Killing The Wyrms

The ironwood boat that was turned into a motorboat had been destroyed and the Awakened ones aboard it were all exterminated!

However, Chen Xiaolian could no longer feel sympathy for others. That was because the scent of blood from the bloody stump had already lured over the damned Zombie Wyrms!

Countless thread like figures moved towards him from under the water. The same was true for the gigantic shadow belonging to the mature Zombie Wyrms that had bitten off nearly half of the ironwood boat earlier – this scene was something that he had only witnessed in a movie called the ‘Great White Shark’.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian could not help but become a little dazed. Thankfully, he has a strong companion. Although, it would be more accurate to say that the benefits of having a strong Guild Leader was put on display at that moment!

“Do not daze off!”

Qiu Yun’s oar fell heavily down onto Chen Xiaolian’s head. The strength behind the hit was so strong, it nearly caused Chen Xiaolian to fall into the river. However, this action immediately brought Chen Xiaolian out from his trance.

“Paddle forward! If you do not wish to die, then paddle!”

Qiu Yun gave a furious howl. He stood up and quickly took big strides, moving over Soo Soo’s head as he jumped towards the stern area.

Chen Xiaolian paddled using the oar like a madman, sparing no effort in his actions. At that moment, the speed of his hands has reached its peak...

Soo Soo herself had begun to cry out loud. The timid little girl was on the verge of mentally collapsing: the explosive flames from behind and the gigantic monster’s head that emerged from the water surface pushed the little girl’s tension filled heart to its limit. While not a hard-hearted

person, Chen Xiaolian was simply in no position to go comfort the little girl.

In order to not die... paddle the boat forward!

The ironwood boat moved forward quickly as he fully displayed out his B Class strength. In addition, he no longer cared if his movements were exposed. Under those conditions, the movement speed of the ironwood boat increased by a couple notches.

Qiu Yun himself has not been idling off. Clearly, he owned a form of storage equipment as he quickly produced a metal barrel.

With just one glance, Chen Xiaolian recognized it.

That was... a barrel of gasoline!

Qiu Yun did not bother to slowly unscrew the cap of the barrel. Instead, he raised his sword wielding hand and cut down on the barrel. A layer of the metal barrel was cut off! He then quickly poured the gasoline down upon the river surface in every direction from behind the boat...

After that, he viciously kicked the barrel down the river. He then proceeded with his next step of action.

He brought out a lighter...

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned by that action. His first reaction was to throw Soo Soo onto the surface of the boat. He held the little girl's head down on the boat's board floor and struggled to tightly place her hat on her head. "Hold your breath!"

Qiu Yun's lighter seemingly transformed into a seed of fire as it fell into the surface of the water...

With a loud boom, a mass of flames burst out from the surface of the water and proceeded to spread out!

The gasoline caught fire immediately and spread out through the area with a "shua"! Nearly half of the river area behind them were occupied with flames!

Under the flames, the shadowy 'threads' upon the water surface were

all turned into smoke and eventually disappeared!

These Zombie Wyrms were really weak against fire.

Chen Xiaolian maintained his current position! It was a very simplistic rationale... being bitten to death by the Zombie Wurm or being burnt to death by the flaming gasoline...

Those 2 types of death were clearly not something Chen Xiaolian was willing to choose from!

He did not want to die!

The flames spread out to a distance of 7 to 8 metres all around them. This area seemed to fill him with a hint of comfort.

Soon however...

A gigantic shadow emerged out from beneath the sea of flames!

The huge shuttle shaped head rose, causing the waters to splash outwards and creating an enormous flower of water. In that instant, it seemed as though the flames were being suppressed.

The shuttle shaped head opened its mouth and Chen Xiaolian could clearly feel that a pair of eyes were staring at the boat that he was standing on from far away!

The most frightening part was that this mature Zombie Wurm did not appear fearful towards the gasoline induced flames that were spreading quickly through the water surface. Perhaps, it would be more accurate to say that it showed some amount of wariness towards the flames, but was far from being terrified by it.

Thus, it was able to rush forward through the sea of flames!

Its humongous head slammed into the boat causing the boat to be tossed into the air. The boat then fell down heavily on to the river surface, nearly capsizing in the process.

Qiu Yun however, maintained a stable posture! He picked up one of the oars; without showing any hesitation, he smashed it down onto the huge head located behind them.

The Zombie Wurm's shuttle shaped head that was obviously bigger than Qiu Yun's entire body was struck by the oar. Following a "kacha" sound, the highly durable iron like oar broke into two. As for the shuttle shaped head, the strike caused it to abruptly sink down into the waters.

Qiu Yun's face had turned ugly. He clearly was not a strength type of Awakened one.

Chen Xiaolian noted what was wrong with Qiu Yun... he quickly shouted. "I will help you!"

Qiu Yun did not say anything. Chen Xiaolian summoned out the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword. Seeing the shuttle shaped head emerging out again, he did not waste any breath and immediately launched his skill!

Sword Skill, Linked Dual Strike, Cross Slash!

"Shua shua", a beautiful cross-shaped blade mark imprinted itself onto the surface of the black coloured head... however, it was apparent that the damage was insufficient!

The shuttle shaped head tilted after getting hit. It seemed as though it had received some amount of damage and it then contracted its head.

As Chen Xiaolian's sharp sword struck onto the other party's head, he could feel its iron like toughness!

He could even see sparks flying out!

The toughness of this creature's head was simply shocking!

"Its weakness is its horns!" Qiu Yun shouted aloud. Picking up the other oar, he took advantage of the moment when the shuttle shaped head tilted over to his side and vigorously slam down upon the horns!

A "pa" sound could be heard, seemingly due to something being broken. Then, a mass of black coloured viscous liquid sprayed out!

Darkness covered Chen Xiaolian's vision. Thankfully, Qiu Yun was able to pull him away just in time to avoid being sprayed upon.

A few drops of the liquid were sprayed onto the surface of the ironwood boat. In an instant, those areas emitted a thick smoke. Those areas of the

durable ironwood were being corroded as though it had just been sprayed with concentrated sulphuric acid!

Chen Xiaolian's heart broke out in cold sweat.

The shuttle shaped head issued a cry of pain that sounded terrible. For Chen Xiaolian, that sound resembled the sounds that could be heard when pigs were being slaughtered.

Oh well, now is not the time to put on a sardonic face. The matter that distressed Chen Xiaolian most was that his Cross-shaped Medallion Sword had been lost!

Earlier, when he was executing the Cross Slash skill, his sword had struck onto the other party's head. The impact nearly caused him to lose his grip on his sword. Then, he was abruptly pulled away by Qiu Yun. Although he managed to avoid being hit by the black corrosive liquid...

His grip loosened in the process and the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword was left embedded on the other party's head, sticking out...

He observed as the shuttle shaped head sank down under water again after being struck by them. It also brought with it Chen Xiaolian's Cross-shaped Medallion Sword... the hilt of the sword could be seen protruding out from the water surface.

It was as though the other party had a nail hammered onto its head.

At that moment, the boat suddenly shook!

They watched as a huge shadow collided with them from under the water! A "peng" resounded and the boat was tossed up again, flying a good half a metre up into the air!

Its head had been forced off, but this was the Zombie Wurm's body! It was just like a snake: its head may be beaten off, but its body was just like an iron whip lashing out towards the ironwood boat!

As the boat fell, Chen Xiaolian sat down with his buttocks to the floor and he subconsciously embraced Soo Soo to avoid them being thrown overboard. However, as he was crawling up, his blood froze!

Qiu Yun... was not on board!

A clear sound of something falling into the water rang out. Chen Xiaolian's eyes saw Qiu Yun's figure fall head first into the water. After that... he did not surface!

Could their strongest battle force die just like that?

Chen Xiaolian had no time to think about those as the shuttle shaped head emerged once again...

Soo Soo burst out in tears. As for Chen Xiaolian, his eyes had turned red!

He does not want to die!

He does not want to die!

He does not want to die yet!

His hands came in contact with something cold... it was the blade of an axe!

It was the item brought over by that accursed severed arm!

Chen Xiaolian grabbed it only to find that fingers of the severed arm were still tightly gripping onto the handle. After spending a moment to pull it out, he found that he could not do so. In desperation, Chen Xiaolian decided to ignore it and directly clutched onto the severed arm instead and threw the axe forward!

Bang!

The axe did not hit strike the Zombie Wurm on its head! Instead, it struck heavily down onto the hilt of Chen Xiaolian's Cross-shaped Medallion Sword!

It was similar to how a hammer would strike down on a nail... then...

A "pu" sound could be heard!

Indeed! Chen Xiaolian was able to clearly hear that sound!

The 'nail' had originally only pierced lightly into the head of the Zombie Wurm. The axe then hammered it deep down!

The Zombie Wyrms were unable to endure it anymore!

For any creature, having a nail hammered down its head would certainly be something they cannot endure!

Call it a lucky strike, a person's Heavenly defying luck or whatever you like; but Chen Xiaolian's axe throw coincidentally gave the Zombie Wyrms a critical blow!

The Zombie Wyrms' body suddenly emerged from the surface of the water!

This spectacle caused Chen Xiaolian to become stunned.

The thickness of its body was roughly the size of the iron barrels used by peddlers to sell roasted sweet potatoes!

Its length on the other hand was around 20 metres!

Once again, the Zombie Wyrms released the miserable cry resembling those issued when a pig was being slaughtered. Its body thrashed about on the river and its tail was lashed out upon the cavern walls! Banging sounds echoed out; the entire cavern trembled and rocks of various sizes scattered about!

Chen Xiaolian felt most thankful for the fact that the creature could no longer open its mouth!

That was correct! It just so happened that the Cross-shaped Medallion Sword had pierced down through its mouth all the way to its chin! It had become a nail, tacking the creature's mouth up!

The water surface roiled about violently and the ironwood boat became in danger of being overturned!

Chen Xiaolian struggled to hold on to the edges of the boat as his other hand held onto Soo Soo. He mustered all his strength to stop himself and Soo Soo from being thrown overboard.

As he was thinking that this could be the end...

Suddenly, he caught sight of a figure through the corner of his eye!

A hand emerged out from the water surface and grabbed onto the body of the Zombie Wyrmling! Two hands then struggled to hold onto the Zombie Wyrmling's body before pulling its figure out onto the back of the Zombie Wyrmling!

It was Qiu Yun!

Qiu Yun was in a dishevelled state and his wet hair had stuck together. However, his eyes carried with it a cold killing intent!

Qiu Yun turned and moved towards the Zombie Wyrmling's head. He reached the head at an incredible speed and produced an item. He then thrust it with all his might into the Zombie Wyrmling's head!

It was a sword!

A two-foot-long sword!

The Zombie Wyrmling thrashed out in pain once again. This time, Qiu Yun had both his hands held tightly onto the hilt of the sword. Despite having his body thrown upwards a few times, he maintained his hold onto the sword hilt and did not fall!

His hands manically held onto the sword as it shook back and forth...

The Zombie Wyrmling struggled for one whole minute. Then... things slowly quieted down...

Its huge body floated up to the water surface... its gigantic head was also fully revealed...

A 20 metre long and immense body floated upon the river surface. Obviously... it had lost its vitality.

Qiu Yun straightened himself and used his leg to stamp down onto the sword hilt... with a "pu", the sword hilt disappeared down the head!

Behind them, the inflammation caused by the gasoline slowly faded. The flames had been blocking off the Zombie Wyrmling hatchlings. But now it has clearly began to die out.

Qiu Yun showed no signs of panic or discontent as he jumped onto the ironwood boat. He glanced at Chen Xiaolian who was holding onto Soo

Soo while also holding onto the boat.

“Well done, rookie! Now, let go of the little girl. Before the flames are extinguished, we need to paddle our way out of this river – that is if you do not want to die!”

Chapter 60: Bone Crusher! Demon King's Three Axes

Chen Xiaolian wearily pulled the ironwood boat ashore. He was so tired that he felt a desire to just lie himself down on the riverbank and sleep for one whole day and night.

He forced his body up – the most concerning part was mental fatigue. After having pulled the ironwood boat ashore as per Qiu Yun's instructions, he pulled Soo Soo aside and sat down. After that, he retrieved an energy bar, which he tore out and vigorously munched down on.

The underground river finally came to an end. Upon the rocky beach that they were at was a dome-shaped cave entrance. Judging by the well-ordered shape of the entrance, it must be manmade.

After finishing an energy bar, Chen Xiaolian brought out a bottle of mineral water. He unscrewed it and first handed it to Soo Soo. "Do you want to drink?"

Soo Soo shook her head – the little girl had at some point turned silent. She did not say anything and only looked at Chen Xiaolian as she shook her head. Traces of tears could be seen upon her face. Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile and used his hands to wipe away the tear marks. He then spoke out warmly. "Do not be afraid."

"En," Soo Soo lightly nodded her head.

Dang!

An axe fell before Chen Xiaolian, thrown over by Qiu Yun.

The severed arm was still gripping upon the axe. Chen Xiaolian glanced at the axe that was gleaming with a cold light. Then, he heard Qiu Yun's voice. "Your Cross-shaped Medallion Sword was lost. Take this weapon to make up for it."

Seemingly numb towards the sight of the bloody stump, Chen Xiaolian picked it up and forcibly pulled each fingers off. After that, he threw the

stump into the underground river before examining the axe.

[Weapon name: Bone Crusher, Type: War Axe, B Class Weapon, complementing skills: All types of axe skills, suitable for strength type and melee type Players].

Bone Crusher?

It has quite the overbearing name.

However, I do not have any axe skills.

Qiu Yun walked over and sat down before Chen Xiaolian. He retrieved a cigarette and lit it up – Heaven knows where this fellow kept so many cigarettes.

“Any problem?”

“En,” Chen Xiaolian nodded. “This item is good, a B Class weapon. However... I do not know of any axe skills.”

“You can still use it without axe skills. Only, you won’t be able to execute melee skills,” Qiu Yun glanced at Chen Xiaolian. “I will give you one suggestion.”

“What?”

“Have you ever considered which development route to go for?” Qiu Yun slowly said. “Melee Type or Ranged Type.”

“Is there a big difference?”

“It is not big, but it is not small either,” Qiu Yun pondered about it and slowly spoke out. “Truth be told, all Players and Awakened ones will have both Melee and Ranged Types. Those of the pure Melee Type or pure Ranged Type have a very noticeable weakness. However, one of them must be focused upon. In other words, you can choose melee attacks as your main repertoire of fighting skills. At the same time, it would be best if you can have some methods to initiate ranged attacks as a supporting skill. Otherwise, an enemy could toy with you to your death simply by keeping some distance from you.

The same holds true vice versa.

Players and Awakened ones with only one pure type will be eliminated quickly.”

Chen Xiaolian thought about it. “Currently, I should be considered a Melee Type. I grasped onto a sword skill.”

“For any weapon’s melee skills, there will be a division between Basic Skills and Special Skills,” Qiu Yun spoke in a low tone. “Just now, I had seen the sword skill of yours during the fight. Linked Dual Slash, Cross Slash. That skill is a Basic Sword Skill.

Basic skills have a small probability of being comprehended during actual combat. The probability of comprehension is related to the level of weapons or equipment that you use.

Theoretically speaking, by holding onto a beginner’s light sabre, you can go find a monster and fight it for about 300 rounds. You will then have a chance to grasp onto a Basic Sword Skill or another type of attack moves. If you are holding onto a high-levelled weapon, for example B Class or above, even S Class, then just a moment’s worth of fighting will allow you to comprehend some basic skills. In addition, some high-levelled weapons come with skills equipped.

If we are to exclude Basic Martial Skills, then the other high-levelled martial skills will generally require Skill Books. You learn those skills by loading those Skill Books.”

“Skill Books...” Chen Xiaolian became silent.

He had known of the existence of Skill Books. As he was making his preparations, he had tried to understand the Exchange System with Han Bi’s help. Within the Exchange System was various types of items available for exchange, including equipment, weapons, props, medicines... and skills!

Chen Xiaolian sighed and deliberately spoke out. “My points are not enough.”

Qiu Yun glanced at the Bone Crusher Axe within Chen Xiaolian’s hand, the corners of his lips suddenly curled upwards.

[System Prompt, Guild Channel: Guild Leader Qiu Yun has gifted you 'Demon King of Confusion's War Axe Skill Book' X 1, do you wish to accept?]

"En?" Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Qiu Yun.

"I acquired it in a previous instance dungeon," Qiu Yun shrugged and took another drag from his cigarette. "I cannot use it while the other guild members do not use axe as their weapon. Originally, I had wanted to have it sold at a later time. However, it just so happened that you have picked up this weapon. Additionally, you are also a newbie who have yet to select your development route. So, I will give this to you."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiu Yun and was suddenly speechless.

"I am not giving it to you for free," Qiu Yun laughed out with indifference. "This time's instance dungeon is very dangerous. Since I only have you as my guild member here, I need you to have a stronger fighting ability in order to support me. So, there is no need for you to feel moved. I am not doing charity here."

"... Thank you!" Chen Xiaolian uttered out each of those words with sincerity.

Qiu Yun waved his hand. "Take advantage of the current time to familiarize yourself with it."

...

[Demon King of Confusion's War Axe Skill Book: The legendary Cheng Yao Jin's unique axe skill, B Class Skill Book

. Usage requirement: Must be equipped with an axe type of weapon of the B Class or above, Physique must be at B Class or above].

En, both requirements have been met.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the Skill Book through the system interface and chose to confirm.

Instantly, a mass of faint silver light shone out and the Skill Book within his Item Box disintegrated and disappeared.

Instead, a faint set of memories and knowledge was added to his consciousness.

Chen Xiaolian picked up the Bone Crusher Axe and waved it in his hand. The strange and heavy feeling of coldness disappeared. In its place was a comfortable and dexterous feeling that seemed to originate from his heart.

He casually waved the axe handle a few times before something flashed through his consciousness. The axe in his hand then made a few chopping and smashing actions.

[Demon King of Confusion's Axe Skills: Linked Triple Strike, Axe Skill. First move, Head Cleaver; second move, Impish Teeth Displacer; third move, Ear Gouger].

Ok... these names made it lose its entire overbearing aura.

However... a B Class skill's power will likely be decent.

Additionally, there was also a marked prompt at the bottom: Skill enhancement requires proficiency.

At the current, the skill level was at LV1. The highest level was LV3.

Chen Xiaolian moved to an open area by the riverbank. He took a deep breath and suddenly launched his moves!

The axe handle spun around within his palm. Then, he held it with both hands and hacked it downwards!

The rotating axe turned into a white ray and a piece of rock situated on the riverbank was split into two with a "ca" sound!

First move: Head Cleaver!

Next, the Bone Crusher Axe within his hand sprung up. Its movement was smooth without any sense of sloppiness! The axe was raised up high, carrying with it sparks of cold light that bloomed out, causing the few broken rocks on the ground to shake. Under the rays of the cold light, they were disintegrated!

Second move: Impish Teeth Displacer!

Chen Xiaolian did not stop and the axe within his hand flowed like water. It moved above his head before drawing an arc downwards, chopping forward horizontally!

A “weng” sound burst out! A ray of light that resembled a white chain sprayed outwards! It spread out to form a circular arc of sharp light! The area surrounding Chen Xiaolian within around 4 paces from him was shrouded by this white light formed by the horizontal chopping motion!

Third move: Ear Gouger!

Pulling the axe backwards, Chen Xiaolian gasped for breath. Looking at the Bone Crusher Axe in his hand, he could not help but feel stunned. His mind was instantly struck by a feeling of surprise!

This was... the feeling of power!

This Demon King of Confusion’s Linked Triple Strike was displayed smoothly. Chen Xiaolian himself was surprised to find that there was no impediment in his movements. It was as though he had been practicing this set of axe moves since the day he was born! Moreover, the power displayed truly made him satisfied!

“It seems that you have managed to grasp it,” Qiu Yun walked up from behind Chen Xiaolian. Glancing at him, he said in an indifferent manner. “The loading of the axe skill went well and your Physique and strength is also sufficient. However, keep in mind that any skill, be it Exclusive Skill or Martial Skill, will end up consuming your strength. The more skill you use, the more strength will be consumed. Your body build does not appear as the strength type; however, using an axe type of weapon with your thin body build could possibly give your opponent a surprise. Perhaps it would end up bringing an even better result.”

A strength type with a thin body build?

Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile.

“Can I request something from you?” Chen Xiaolian said with a cautious tone.

“What?”

Chen Xiaolian pointed at Soo Soo. "Can you accept her into Meteor Rock Guild?"

Qiu Yun glanced at Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian had originally thought that Qiu Yun would reject or at least question him. Unexpectedly, Qiu Yun did not even bother asking him anything and directly nodded his head.

Soon, his system received a prompt.

[Prompt, Guild Channel: Your current guild, Meteor Rock Guild has accepted a new member].

Chen Xiaolian became startled. He turned to look at Qiu Yun but Qiu Yun turned around and left while saying. "I know what you want to do... although I think this act is stupid, but... there are presently too few idiots like you left in this world."

"Thank you, Guild Leader!" Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly towards Qiu Yun's back.

Ever since they met, this was the first time that he sincerely called him 'Guild Leader'.

...

Next, Chen Xiaolian did something that others might indeed consider as stupid.

He used his remaining 300 points at the Guild's Special Exchange System to exchange out a B Class 'Meteor Rock Protective Suit'.

The B Class Meteor Rock Protective Suit was very similar to the protective suit that Chen Xiaolian had seen before in terms of shape. It was shaped like a tight sleeveless vest seemingly made with lighter material. Feeling it with his fingertips, he could feel a sense of softness that carried with it a tough nature.

He lifted the silvery white vest with his hands. It was very light and has about the same weight as an ordinary sweater.

Chen Xiaolian did not wear it upon himself. Instead, we walked to Soo

Soo's side and placed the protective suit upon Soo Soo.

"Be obedient, wear it properly!" Chen Xiaolian said in a deep voice.

Soo Soo raised her head in surprise and used a peculiar expression to glance at Chen Xiaolian. The little girl did not say anything or tried to refuse. She obediently wore the protective suit.

Due to the elastic nature of the material, it was not difficult for even the thin, little girl to wear it. The suit was able to roughly complement her body.

"All right," Chen Xiaolian helped smoothen her ruffled hair and smiled. "This time, you will be much safer."

Chen Xiaolian stood up and rested the axe upon his shoulder. He turned to look at Qiu Yun who was standing not far away. "Guild Leader, are we heading out now?"

Soo Soo stood behind Chen Xiaolian, a strange look flashing across her little face. She lowered her head, both her hands were clenched tightly before being loosened... she then extended her hand to gently grab onto the corners of Chen Xiaolian's clothes.

Chen Xiaolian failed to notice that Soo Soo had murmured something in a low tone, as though she was talking to herself.

"... Xiaolian oppa..."

Soo Soo's expression turned into an oasis of calmness.

1 Cheng Yao Jin was a famed general who served under the Tang Dynasty. In popular culture, Cheng Yaojin is often depicted as a somewhat inept and bumbling warrior who sometimes shows up at the right place and right time to save the day. In the part historical drama 'Heroes of Sui & Tang', he was granted the title 'Demon King of Confusion' due to how often he gains his victories by bumbling about cluelessly. He is also reputed to only have three moves to use in battles.

Chapter 61: Black Knights Guild

Walking through the passageway, Chen Xiaolian gradually became convinced of one thing: This was obviously a gigantic labyrinth.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it was an underground mausoleum, also known as a burial mausoleum!

As to who was the owner of this mausoleum, do you really have to ask?

The passageway through the mausoleum was very flat. Walking through the darkness, Qiu Yun and Chen Xiaolian wore wearing hats with searchlights affixed onto them.

After walking for about 10 minutes, the passageway opened up before them!

They found an accompaniment tomb.

A square shaped tomb with a size that far outstripped a basketball court opened up before them.

Gold plated copper statues stood around the tomb. Their shapes were ancient, plain, and their faces emanating silence. Those copper statues replaced the role of pillars and stood around the tomb.

Before them stood several rows of Qin terracotta soldiers. The terracotta soldiers were armed with bronze swords, each looking different from the other. Behind them, there were also two war chariots. The horses were carved out to exhibit extreme liveliness, its body prancing with its hooves raised up to the skies. The terracotta soldier standing atop the war chariot held onto a pole arm. There was also terracotta soldiers equipped with crossbows in the surrounding area. The edge of their arrows still seemed sharp, seemingly free of corruptions.

Chen Xiaolian noted that all the weapons held by the terracotta soldiers were directed towards the outer passageways of the tomb.

A terracotta general stood upon a platform, one hand placed upon his waist while the other held onto a sword, releasing an aura that rose to the skies!

Walking by these terracotta soldiers as he moved through the tomb, a feeling of unease welled up within Chen Xiaolian. He subconsciously gripped Soo Soo's small hand tightly only to find that Soo Soo's hand was cold and seemingly steady. He turned around to look at the little girl and saw that she was using a tranquil expression to gaze at the terracotta soldiers beside them.

The abnormality of her steady state caused Chen Xiaolian to finally realize that something was wrong. He frowned and pulled Soo Soo to his side. Then, he whispered. "Soo Soo? Are you all right?"

Soo Soo's small face remained calm as she pointed towards the Qin terracotta general that was standing on the platform situated some distance away. The little girl spoke with a calm, soft and delicate voice. "Xiaolian oppa, they... seemed furious."

Furious?

Hearing those words, Chen Xiaolian became shocked.

It was at that moment that Qiu Yun who was leading them suddenly raised his hand, forming a stopping signal.

Several beams of light suddenly swept over from the frontal left area of the tomb. It was from another entrance. Accompanying those lights were faint sounds of footsteps.

"There are people?" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "Why didn't the radar reveal them?"

Qiu Yun lowered his voice. "This types of instances will generally limit items of the technology type, the system radar is also considered a technology type..."

He quickly bent his body and the three of them immediately hid under the platform situated in the centre of the tomb. At the same time, the searchlights on their heads were turned off.

As the three of them bent down to hide, Chen Xiaolian did not notice that the Qin terracotta general that was standing upon the platform... the general's right foot that was moulded onto the stone platform gave a

seemingly light nudge...

...

“Hurry!”

“Ah, there is a door in front!”

“Charge in! Luke, cut off the rear and close the door! If you can’t, then use bombs!”

“Damn it! Where did Naves go to?”

“He fell behind! I saw him get killed! Do not worry about him, run fast!”

The miserable sound of staggering footsteps came forth from beyond the door of the passageway. Then, they saw a few beams of shaking light as four people wearing strange clothing madly rushed inside!

The last person to enter was a black man with a fat stature. He gasped intensely for breath; just as his right foot stepped in through the door, an air piercing sound could be heard closing in from behind! “Xiu!”

A sharp arrow pierced through his body. The black man’s body trembled, his eyes turned upwards and he cried out miserably before falling down onto the ground!

“Luke!”

The one in the lead was a young woman. Hearing the sound, she turned her head around. Seeing the black man lying on the floor, she cried out in a sharp and mournful voice. Her companions quickly pulled her out of the way as two bronze arrows pierced the spot that she was standing upon earlier!

“Close the door! Hurry and close the door!”

A Caucasian man rushed to the side and forcibly pushed the stone door shut. With a “boom” sound, the stone door was closed. He also picked up a stone seam from the ground and placed it on the door’s latch.

Boom!

A muffled bang suddenly resounded from beyond the door! The door

could be seen shaking a little while no small amount of stone chips and dust fell down!

The three survivors cried out and subconsciously retreated. The woman gritted her teeth. "Prepare for combat!"

As she spoke, she produced a western styled long sword which she gripped using her hand. Of her two companions, one was a Caucasian man who wielded a shield and a short axe while the other was a thin man dressed completely in black and had a flustered expression – his hands held onto a curving wooden stick.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Beyond the door, a certain force hammered against the stone door. After a few moments of hammering, the sounds slowly faded away.

The three people panted and stared anxiously at the stone door for a long time. After they determined that the sound had faded away, they let out sighs of relief.

"They... seemed to have left?" The thin man in black placed down the wooden stick in his hand. After turning around however, he suddenly became no different from a cat that just had its tail stepped on and screamed sharply. "Damn it! There are more here!"

All three of them immediately turned around. Seeing the rows of terracotta soldiers arranged within the tomb, they anxiously raised their weapons.

"Don't do anything! Damn it!" The woman suddenly shouted out loudly. "Can't you people see? They are not alive! They haven't come to live yet!"

"Not... alive?"

The thin man in black jumpily observed the tomb's contents, his body contracting into one mass.

The shield wielding Caucasian man looked at the thin man with disdain. "Mars, can you stop being so cowardly all the time? Don't you know? In the battlefield, the ones with the smallest guts are the one to die

first!”

“Thank God!” The thin, black dressed Mars exhaled. “I am just an ordinary high school teacher! Damn it! Why did I get caught up in this terrifying world? Charlie! I am not like you who is originally of the military!”

The shield bearing Caucasian, Charlie sneered. “Head, what do we do now?”

The young woman spoke in a very gloomy tone. “What else can we do? We came in with 6 people. In just a short span of time, half has died! Damn it! Why is this time’s instance dungeon so hard?”

She inhaled deeply. “Be extra careful and do not touch these terrifying statues! Back then, Luke was touching around everywhere, Heaven knows if he might have triggered a magic of some kind! For the sake of safety, none of us should touch those terrifying statues!”

Charlie held up the shield and examined the tomb. “There are several passageways here. Let us find a path out of here.”

“I feel that we can no longer move forward,” The timid Mars spoke out in a quivering voice. “We have already lost 3 people... if we continue moving forward, all of us will die here!”

Charlie who was at the back gave a grunt and abruptly moved forward. He gripped Mars’ neck and lifted him up before throwing him down the ground with force. He then extended his foot to stamp down on his chest. “Coward! Listen carefully! This is not a game and not an act! No one will come save you! And no one will give you the right to drop out! If you want to live, then pluck up your courage!”

“Charlie, let Mars off,” The young woman sighed. “This is only his second instance dungeon after all. He is still just a rookie.”

“Bah!” Charlie spat out. “A coward. I really do not understand why you would accept such a coward into our guild.”

“He is very useful,” The young woman shook her head and frowned. “We are all of the fighting type... don’t you know how rare it is to get a magic

type of team member amongst Awakened ones these days?”

The young woman walked over and pulled up the timid Mars. She patted away the dust on his body and smiled. “It is fine, Mars. This is just Charlie’s nature, he won’t really hurt you.”

“Leader, Guild Leader,” Mars quavered. “Maybe, maybe we can find a place to hide... then hide until the end of the instance dungeon?”

“Idiots,” Charlie grunted. “No small amount of time has passed. Conventionally speaking, the Players will be arriving soon! Hide? Stop joking around! I will not gamble my life away on a bet and hope that those fellows do not find me!”

At that moment...

The young woman’s eyes suddenly widened and she shouted out in a low voice. “There is someone! Who is it?”

Charlie’s reaction was fast. He immediately raised up the shield, holding it before him – despite saying those blunt words, he was still a dutiful person. His shield not only covered him, but also the timid Mars.

Qiu Yun walked out from behind the stone platform with a smile.

“Black Knights Guild?” Qiu Yun lit up a lighter in his hand and stood under the light, allowing the other party to see his features clearly. “It has been a while, Guild Leader Alice.”

“Qiu Yun?”

The young woman’s expression changed. However, her expression was one of pleasant surprise. “By the Gods! Guild Leader Qiu Yun! Thank the Gods, it’s actually you!”

Charlie too seemed to be relieved. He placed down the shield in his hand and looked at Qiu Yun with a friendly gaze.

Alice strode over and hugged Qiu Yun. “Our last meeting was in that instance half a year back. Guild Leader Qiu Yun, I still owe you a great debt.”

Charlie smiled and placed two fingers in front of his forehead in a

military salute.

“That is enough, now is not the time to reminisce about old times. Let me introduce my new guild members.”

When Qiu Yun led Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo out from behind the stone platform, the three of them were stunned.

The one called Guild Leader Alice stared at Chen Xiaolian for a while before looking at Soo Soo. “This... this is your new guild members, Guild Leader Qiu Yun? Two little kids?”

“Only one little kid,” Qiu Yun laughed. “The boy is already a grown man, he is already eighteen-years-old.”

“You are really getting more...en, in your words, is it Buddha-hearted ?” Alice gave Qiu Yun a look.

Chen Xiaolian observed that there were clearly some traces of fawning within the look that Alice gave Qiu Yun.

En... these two Guild Leaders seem to have a sexual relationship going on?

“Xiaolian, come,” Qiu Yun waved over to Chen Xiaolian. “Let me introduce everyone. These people are the Black Knights Guild members from New Zealand. This is Guild Leader Alice. The one carrying the shield is a valiant warrior, Charlie. Don’t be fooled by his friendly smile; this fellow used to serve as an elite soldier for the army. As for this one...” Qiu Yun looked at the timid Mars and smiled without saying anything.

“This is our new guild member, he is called Mars,” Guild Leader Alice laughed. “Do not underestimate him, he is a magician!”

Qiu Yun’s brows rose. “A magician? Congratulations are in order then, Alice. Magic type guild members are very sought after.”

As the conversation progressed, Chen Xiaolian did not say anything out of turn. He simply stood cautiously by the side and held onto Soo Soo...

It was at that moment the Soo Soo suddenly gave Chen Xiaolian’s hand a gentle tug. “Xiaolian oppa.”

“En,” Chen Xiaolian lowered his head, then his face suddenly changed. “You... Soo Soo, what did you call me?”

“Xiaolian oppa,” Soo Soo’s face remained calm as she looked up.

“You...” Chen Xiaolian finally realized where the source of the problem was!

The normal Soo Soo could absolutely never remain so calm and quiet... additionally...

Soo Soo in her normal state could not remember what she experienced in the 72 Demons instance dungeon! Thus, she would never call him ‘Xiaolian oppa’!

The only one willing to call him that was only...

“Soo Soo, you, again...”

“En, I came out,” Soo Soo’s second personality finally revealed a light trace of a smile. “Xiaolian oppa did not realize at all along the way. You are very slow.”

“...”

Just as Chen Xiaolian was about to say something, Soo Soo suddenly got up and spoke into Chen Xiaolian’s ear. “Xiaolian oppa, this place is very dangerous... I feel very uneasy, it is better for us to leave this place!”

“Dangerous?”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes instantly narrowed. “Soo Soo, tell me about it in more detail.”

“I can ‘see’ that they are watching us. Also... they seem very angry, they are getting even angrier!”

...

1 ‘Buddha-hearted’, raw: ‘菩萨心肠’, pinyin: ‘púsà xīncháng’. Meaning: A kind-hearted person.

Name: Alice, raw: ‘爱丽丝’, pinyin: ‘àilì sī’

Name: Charlie, raw: ‘查理’, pinyin: ‘chálǐ’

Name: Mars, raw: ‘马尔斯’, pinyin: ‘mǎ’ěr sī

Extra: A tomb is a large vault for burying the dead, while a mausoleum is an impressive building that houses one or more tombs. [Source: Wiki].

Chapter 62: You People Are Too Gullible

See them?

Soo Soo spoke those words using the delicate and clear voice unique to lolis. However, hearing that would cause one to feel a chill going down their spine...

Despite saying those words while being beside Chen Xiaolian's ears, the silent atmosphere in the tomb caused everyone beside to hear it as well.

Black Knights Guild Leader, Alice's face suddenly changed. "What did she say?"

Soo Soo ignored Alice and tugged the corners of Chen Xiaolian's clothes. "Xiaolian oppa, let us leave this place quickly."

"Hey, what is this child saying?" Alice cried out in annoyance. "What can you see?"

As she was talking, Alice extended her hand to grab Soo Soo. Soo Soo quickly shrunk away, avoiding Alice's hand. Soo Soo then stared coldly at Alice with her pair of big, dark eyes.

Alice is the Guild Leader of the Black Knights Guild that has quite some fame amongst the Awakened community. However, being stared upon by this little girl caused Alice to feel her hair standing on end...

On such a pretty and innocent face, her expression and gaze was too calm and... cold!

A coldness that signified the absence of any emotions whatsoever.

"Soo Soo, what exactly did you see?" Chen Xiaolian looked at Guild Leader Alice with a slightly dissatisfied expression. He knew though, that now was not the time to get into a fight. He turned around and crouched down, patting Soo Soo's mushroom like hair and asking in a soft voice.

"Soo Soo, tell me. What can you see?"

"If it's Xiaolian oppa..." Soo Soo blinked and spoke with a calm voice. "I can see their colour."

“Colour?”

“En, there is a black outer layer, but there is a red colour moving about inside, like a red coloured cotton candy. The black outer layer is getting thinner. They seem very angry; en, they are angry at us. The black layer is about to break... Oh no! He is about to move!”

After saying that, Soo Soo suddenly lifted her hand to point at the Qin terracotta general standing above the stone platform.

After the loli finished speaking out her words, everyone’s face inclusive of Qiu Yun showed change. This was especially true for the timid Mars. He gave a shrill cry and ran behind Charlie, his body shivering.

Charlie and Alice have already pulled out their swords and they vigilantly pointed it towards the Qin terracotta general. Even Chen Xiaolian was gripping tightly onto the Bone Crusher Axe!

“ ... ”

“ ”

“ ”

Three seconds went by... five seconds went by...

However, under their watchful eyes, the Qin terracotta general remained immobile, maintaining its sculpted posture.

“Gegege ge ge...”

Soo Soo suddenly covered her mouth with her sleeve and pointed to the few adults. With a calm and icy voice, she said. “You adults, you are too gullible.”

“Bastard!” The timid Mars abruptly turned furious, he grimaced and he shouted at Soo Soo. “Do you have a death wish!” After saying that, he pointed the wooden stick in his hands at Soo Soo.

“Hey, be polite!” Chen Xiaolian coldly pushed aside Mars wooden stick. “Do you have any grudge against little kids?”

Mars panted and stared viciously at Chen Xiaolian. It appeared that he

wanted to attack. However, his cowardly nature held him back. Unable to help himself, he then turned to look at Alice.

Alice's face turned somewhat ugly and she gritted her teeth. "Enough, don't argue with a little child about this."

Qiu Yun pursed his lips to the side, not saying anything. Charlie however, looked around at the surrounding terracotta soldiers within the tomb. He suddenly frowned. "I also don't feel comfortable here. It is better for us to leave here quickly."

"Alice, what monsters did you encounter earlier? Did these terracotta soldiers come to life?" Qiu Yun frowned.

"Yes!" Alice replied in a low voice. "We walked for a long time within a labyrinth. Then, we saw a huge number of these statues. Heaven knows what happened! They suddenly came to life! These things are very powerful and their numbers are high, so..."

Qiu Yun immediately made a decision. "We need to leave this place!"

Soo Soo blinked as she observed them discussing. She quietly pulled Chen Xiaolian's hand. After Chen Xiaolian had moved over, she made a come over here gesture with her finger. Chen Xiaolian then bent down and heard Soo Soo whispering softly into his ear. She said...

"Xiaolian oppa, the top is the safest, remember!"

"En?" Chen Xiaolian was surprised. Soo Soo however, only smiled at him and pointed upwards... towards the ceiling of the tomb.

Soo Soo sighed and counted in a low tone. "Three, two, one..."

Originally, Chen Xiaolian felt peculiar, as he could not understand what Soo Soo was counting for. His face soon changed!

Weng!

As Qiu Yun was discussing with Alice, the sound of a strong breeze could suddenly be heard!

Qiu Yun responded immediately. His body leaned to the side and a pole arm pierced through the air!

A terracotta soldier who had come to life held the pole arm. Despite issuing “ka ka” sounds when moving its arms, he took big strides forward and his pole arm swept out horizontally!

This time, Qiu Yun quickly leapt up and the pole arm swept past him. Charlie used his shield to vigorously impact against it. With a bang, Charlie and his shield slammed into the terracotta soldier, breaking him into countless pieces of rocks!

“Damn it!”

Several of them cursed out angrily!

At that moment, a scene, which sent a chill down Chen Xiaolian’s spine, occurred!

All those rows of terracotta soldiers within the tomb came to life! Those fully equipped Qin soldiers stretched their bodies. Some shook their head while others swayed. Then, they all raised their weapons at the same time!

On the high platform, the high-ranking general suddenly opened his mouth and got into a howling posture. The sound he released was not that loud, almost similar to that of a leaking organ. However, following this strange roar of his...

All the terracotta soldiers abruptly moved in a uniform manner, lining up in an orderly array, like a sharp edge of an incoming axe!

With a “shua”, the pole arms were raised high, resembling a neat row of trees! The crossbows were readied and the front row of terracotta soldiers quickly crouched down!

The general wielded his bronze sword and jumped down from the platform. It then brandished the sword, pointing it at Chen Xiaolian and the rest. “Kill the enemies!”

Roar!

The Qin soldiers let loose the same roar in unison within the square area! The forest of pole arms pierced over towards them!

...

“{F*ck}!”

Charlie first let out a curse even as his shield was held in front in defence. Several bangs resounded as the pole arms smashed onto his shield. Charlie quickly retreated. “Hurry up and run!”

Alice dodged two pole arms coming at her from both left and right. With a long sword, she parried off a sword strike from a terracotta soldier before her. At the same time, she delivered a kick down onto the terracotta soldier, sending it smashing down on the ground. The lower body of the terracotta warrior were smashed to pieces, but its upper body continued crawling upon the ground. It held onto its sword and attempted to move closer to Alice...

Even more terracotta soldiers charged forward!

These fellows’ actions resembled those of the ancient Qin soldiers. They arranged themselves in teams and charged forward. Pole arms, swords, shields, everything was thrown forward. In addition, there were also the terracotta soldiers who were some distance away. Those soldiers quickly turned their crossbows...

As Alice was vehemently hacking down a terracotta soldier, air-piercing sounds could be heard!

A bronze arrowhead seemingly swept past Alice’s nose! The Black Knights Guild Leader whose face looked quite pretty now sported a bloody mark. The bronze arrow finally struck Mars in his left arm, piercing right through it!

Mars gave a miserable shriek and fell to the ground, rolling about. He was then picked up by his neck by Charlie and thrown to the back of his shield.

“Mars, stop shouting! Hurry up and use your magic!” Charlie used the shield to defend them. At the same time, his hand brandished a sword, desperately trying to prevent the terracotta soldiers from approaching.

The first thing Chen Xiaolian did was to hold onto Soo Soo, throw

himself onto the ground and rolled far away. That way, he was able to avoid the pole arms coming from both left and right. As he got up, the Bone Crusher Axe was already held tight in his hand. Seeing a pole arm wielding terracotta soldier charging at him, Chen Xiaolian did not bother to hesitate and chopped down at its head!

Head Cleaver!

“Kacha!” Bone Crusher Axe hacked down onto the terracotta soldier’s head and proceeded downwards, splitting the terracotta soldier’s body in half! Two sword wielding terracotta soldiers rushed forward from behind...

Impish Teeth Displacer!

The axe was lifted up and the terracotta soldier on the left was pulled up... like earlier, this one was also split in half!

Ear Gouger!

The axe descended, drawing an arc through the air, before sweeping out horizontally. The terracotta soldier on the right too had its chest directly spilt off!

Demon King of Confusion’s Three Axes!

Chen Xiaolian displayed the strikes in one breath’s time. The three moves took down three terracotta soldiers, one for each move. All of which were displayed with extreme dexterity!

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt his heart becoming inflamed. After utilizing the axe skills, his entire being seemed to have changed completely. It was as though a surging flow of blood had been unleashed through his heart! Chen Xiaolian’s gleaming axe struck out without restraint. With another Linked Triple Strike, he destroyed a few other terracotta soldiers. His last move Ear Gouger, hacked apart the waist area of three terracotta soldiers at the same time!

Chen Xiaolian was immersed within the ravaging atmosphere of wanton killings. However, as he was losing himself to the heat of battle...

A crossbow arrow suddenly shot over, sweeping past his scalp. That bolt terrified and shocked his entire body, causing him to sober up!

Looking around, he saw that the three from Black Knights Guild were all engaged in a bitter struggle. Alice was waving a long sword with all her might, Charlie held the shield with one hand while the other held a sword as he defended with everything he has. As for Mars... that fellow was screaming as he rolled on the ground.

Qiu Yun...

Qiu Yun...

Chen Xiaolian desperately searched around and finally caught sight of a shocking scene!

Qiu Yun's body was leaping up, his body in the middle of the air...

His target...

The Qin general on the platform!

In Qiu Yun's hand was a short sword! He swooped down from the air like a huge bird, hacking down on the general's head! The Qin general aggressively raised his bronze sword to block the strike and retreated several steps backwards. Several cracks appeared upon his legs.

The Qin general was extremely fierce. He howled loudly and raised his bronze sword to stab forward! The imposing atmosphere of an elite soldier from the Warring States Era was unleashed, carrying with it a raging surge of killing intent !

Qiu Yun brandished the short sword against the Qin general and their battle was joined. At that moment, Chen Xiaolian turned around and held Soo Soo towards his bosom. Soo Soo suddenly pulled at him and whispered rapidly. "Xiaolian oppa! The top!"

The top?

Chen Xiaolian raised his head to look up top. This time, he finally understood what Soo Soo meant!

At the ceiling of the tomb was a raised area shaped like a sun wheel. It

looked like an embossment.

Taking a deep breath, Chen Xiaolian held onto Soo Soo with one hand and the Bone Crusher Axe on the other, then he vigorously jumped up!

The jumping ability of a B Class Physique was stunning! With one jump, Chen Xiaolian rose up by nearly 5 metres into the air. The Bone Crusher Axe was sent out with intensity and the crescent shaped edge of the axe pierced into the stone, hooking onto the sun wheel!

Chen Xiaolian forced his legs up to hang onto the sun wheel. Mustering his strength, he hooked himself onto it... and so, his entire body came to resemble a gecko, sticking onto the ceiling.

The battle below was no longer avoidable.

It was unknown what material Charlie's shield was made of. However, after being hacked upon countless times, numerous cracks finally appeared on the surface of the shield. He rolled and scrambled upon the ground in a seemingly miserable manner. In fact however, he was fiercely slashing out at the lower part of the Qin terracotta soldiers with the sword in his hand. Around 8 of those terracotta soldiers have already had their legs cut apart under his sword. Charlie's body was also wounded as a crossbow arrow struck him in the shoulder. He jumped up and threw out a pole arm that he had snatched away. A crossbow-bearing terracotta soldier that was standing on the chariot was struck and thrown off the chariot.

As for Alice, it appeared that she is not a pure strength type of fighter. It was clear that she was in a disadvantage in terms of strength. The long sword in her hands could only defend and no longer attack. Under the relentless assault of several terracotta soldiers, she had been pushed to the wall!

At that moment, Alice abruptly let out a sharp cry. Chen Xiaolian suddenly found that Alice had turned completely different! This woman's body speed had suddenly accelerated by who knows how many times! Her body slipped out from between the bodies of the few terracotta soldiers! Her long sword lashed out once and two of the terracotta soldier's head

fell off! Alice's figure was like the wind, no, not the wind! It was so fast; it created after images of her! Chen Xiaolian's eyes were unable to keep up with her!

"What skill is that?" Chen Xiaolian watched on with surprise.

Alice's speed had seemingly increased by tens of times. With "shua shua shua" sounds, several after images appeared within the tomb. She slipped back and forth through every corner like the wind and the terracotta soldiers ended up being dismembered by her! This speed could only display its strength in flat terrain; currently, against these orderly but slow terracotta warriors, this speed was an invaluable weapon.

During that time, the fight between Qiu Yun and the Qin general had been concluded. Qiu Yun had already cut off the sword-wielding arm of the Qin general. He followed it up with a kick, throwing the Qin general off the platform, causing him to be directly smashed into pieces.

After Qiu Yun jumped down from the platform however, a few terracotta soldiers quickly engaged him.

At that moment, the only one who did not have to fight was probably Chen Xiaolian who was hanging onto the ceiling.

As Chen Xiaolian was watching on with surprise, he heard Soo Soo who was being held upon his bosom whisper out. "Xiaolian oppa... do you know how to ride a horse?"

Ride... ride a horse?

Before Chen Xiaolian could react...

Bang!

Bang! Bang!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A heavy crashing sound continued three times in a row!

The stone door that the Black Knights Guild members ran in from was suddenly slammed open!

The stone door broke down and two terracotta soldiers standing close to the door were smashed down the ground by the fallen debris.

Outside the door, holding onto a spear in his hand... a stone mounted rider charged in!

The stone warhorse held its front hooves in the air and neighed. The horse-riding terracotta soldier immediately raised his spear; with a roar, he charged towards Charlie who was closest to him! Behind him, even more terracotta soldiers charged in through the broken stone door... like an incoming tide...

1 The Qin Dynasty emerged from the Qin State, which existed alongside six other states during the Warring States Era. The Warring States Era occurred somewhere between 475 BC to 221 BC. [Source: Wiki].

Chapter 63: Metal Burst

Charlie was the first to be hit with bad luck.

The mounted stone soldier charged towards him and not even his shield could protect him any longer!

The spear shot out. Despite not being pierced through, the powerful strength behind the strike lifted Charlie off his feet and sent him flying!

He was slammed onto a cliff. As he fell, a pole arm cut him on his thigh!

Charlie screamed out in pain. Under those circumstances, he could no longer bother with the shield. Letting go of it, he rolled away. However, he coincidentally rolled to Mars side. As he stood up to run away, he suddenly felt his ankle being grabbed. Turning around, he saw Mars lying on the ground, his body shivering. "Don't leave! Save me... save me!"

Charlie attempted to break away. However, the leg that Mars caught hold of was the injured one. He was unable to exert enough strength and he furiously cursed out. "Let go! You coward! Are you trying to get me killed?"

Too late!

The mounted stone soldier had already rushed over. The warhorse directly crushed Mars head with its hoof while its head slammed into Charlie's body!

The strength behind the impact was shocking! Charlie was sent flying into the air, blood spraying out from him. After he fell, an indentation could be observed on his chest! Several terracotta soldiers immediately surrounded him, their pole arms chopping down ...

Alice's speed had deteriorated. It was apparent that her skill has a time limit. Additionally... there were increasingly more terracotta soldiers swarming into the tomb, causing the tomb to be filled with them! Even if she were faster, she would have no space to manoeuvre about! There were pole arms pointing out from every direction; where could she run?

Alice screeched out as her body was wounded time and again. Thankfully, the leather armour that she was wearing was no ordinary goods. It managed to block off several lethal strikes for her.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes were focused onto the mounted stone soldier. Seeing the stone horse reaching the area below him, he gritted and loosened his legs. Wrenching out the axe, he plummeted from above! Before he even reached the bottom, the axe had already chopped down!

The mounted stone soldier was extremely powerful. However, he was unprepared for an attack from above and Chen Xiaolian's axe directly split his head into two. Chen Xiaolian dropped into a seated position on the horse's saddle. He had one hand holding onto Soo Soo, hugging her close to his chest while his other hand brandished the axe!

Head Cleaver!

Impish Teeth Displacer!

Ear Gouger!

Head Cleaver!

Impish Teeth Displacer!

Ear Gouger!

Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes! Due to him being on horseback, its execution seemed to have acquired a bonus effect!

The area below the horse was something beyond his control as the horse rampaged back and forth in the tomb. Chen Xiaolian was speechless as he found that the damned warhorse... has no stirrups!

Both his legs dangled in the air on both sides of the horse's stomach. He could only depend on his waist and pelvic strength to grip onto the horse to avoid falling off the horse.

Despite that problem, Chen Xiaolian remained seated on the horse with the Bone Crusher Axe in his hand. Unleashing the Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes, his entire being seemingly transformed into a fearsome general. In addition, he also had charging power thanks to the

horse, allowing him to become an invincible existence within the tomb. In but moments, he had swept up an entire area of the terracotta soldiers. All of them were turned to rubble under the horse he rode on!

However, even more terracotta soldiers charged in through the broken stone door! Their numbers appeared to be endless.

“Xiaolian oppa! The left passageway!”

Soo Soo who was being held by him shouted out. Chen Xiaolian quickly delivered a kick to the horse’s belly while his one hand held onto the horse’s neck – without any reins, he could only turn the horse by twisting its neck!

As the warhorse pummelled out towards the left passageway, the sounds of fighting in the tomb behind them rapidly faded away. After riding the horse for tens of steps, Chen Xiaolian suddenly forced the warhorse to stop by holding onto the horse’s neck!

“Xiaolian oppa! Why aren’t you moving?” Soo Soo raised her head and looked at Chen Xiaolian with a frown.

“Soo Soo, about those matters that you found out, why did you only inform me?” Chen Xiaolian’s face was one of seriousness.

“Because Xiaolian oppa is the only one Soo Soo cares for. I have no interest in helping others,” Soo Soo replied with a calm and indifferent voice.

Chen Xiaolian looked at Soo Soo in the eye and hesitated. He finally gave a sigh. “I can ignore others, but not Guild Leader Qiu Yun. He... is a good Guild Leader.”

After saying that, he suddenly held onto Soo Soo with one hand and moved her to his back. “Hold me tightly and do not let go!”

Next, Chen Xiaolian turned the horse around. Raising the Bone Crusher Axe, he let out a howl and charged back into the tomb.

...

Qiu Yun was in a dishevelled state. He had at an unknown time joined

up with Alice. However, Alice had fainted and was leaning onto Qiu Yun. Qiu Yun used one hand to hold Alice while his other brandished a short sword. His expression remained cold while his eyebrows rose up high.

Teng teng teng teng teng!

The deep sound of horse hooves reappeared within the tomb. Chen Xiaolian trampled through countless terracotta soldiers, reducing them to pieces. He rushed before Qiu Yun and quickly held out his hand. "Guild Leader!"

Qiu Yun gritted his teeth and threw Alice, whom he was holding up. "Hold her!"

Chen Xiaolian caught her, then turned to see that Qiu Yun had already turned back and used his sword to cut apart several terracotta soldiers. Qiu Yun shouted. "Go first!"

"Guild Leader, what about you?"

"I have my own methods! You take her away!" Qiu Yun did not even bother looking back.

Chen Xiaolian exerted his strength to shatter two terracotta soldiers on both his left and right with the axe. He then heard Qiu Yun's voice. "Why are you still not going? I have my own ways to escape!"

Chen Xiaolian bit heavily on his teeth. Then, he held onto the horse's neck, turning it around and galloped away...

Upon Qiu Yun's face that was originally calm, a trace of maliciousness flashed out!

Just as Chen Xiaolian was making his way past the doorway of the tomb, he heard a series of intense explosions!

Turning around, he did not see any trace of fire. All he saw was stone scraps flying about as smoke filled his vision...

"Guild Leader?" The surprised Chen Xiaolian shouted out.

Just as he finished his shout, he heard Qiu Yun let out one long roar out from within!

From within the smoke, Qiu Yun's body flew up to the air. He leapt onto the war chariot and hacked down the pole arm-bearing soldier with one sword strike. He then turned around and jumped onto one of the horses pulling the war chariot!

The two horses have long since come to life. However, the war chariot was locked into place, causing the two horses to be unable to move about. They could only neigh at their original spot. Qiu Yun delivered two sword strikes and broke off the iron chains holding the two warhorses. After that, he roared once more and used his sword to stab at the horse's buttocks – stone scraps and sparks flew!

The horse's hooves rose high up into the air and it flew out! With just a few gallops, it pummelled its way out of the tomb, using the same passageway Chen Xiaolian had taken!

From within the tomb, countless terracotta soldiers swarmed forward as they chased him. After charging out of the tomb's passageway, Qiu Yun suddenly turned his body around. He raised his hand and threw out a mass of sparkling bright items. It fell onto the stone door of the passageway with “ka ka ka ka” sounds...

“Hurry up and run! Are you distracted by the view?” Qiu Yun turned around to look at Chen Xiaolian and laughed out loudly. “Move quickly!”

Chen Xiaolian had discerned out what Qiu Yun threw out.

It was...

Money!

More accurately, it was coins. A huge sum of coins!

Qiu Yun let out another long laugh as he urged his horse to chase after Chen Xiaolian. Behind him, the sound of a loud explosion suddenly erupted!

Amidst the booming sound, the entire passageway shook. There were also the terrifying sounds of cracking and collapsing! A wave of thick engulfing dust swept towards them from behind...

After they covered a distance of a hundred metres, the horses suddenly froze. Then, their agile bodies instantly broke apart... in just a moment, the mighty galloping horses were reduced into a pile of stone debris.

Everyone who was on horseback fell down. After they fell, both Chen Xiaolian and Qiu Yun gasped as they sat on the ground. Both of them were unable to help themselves and they shouted out.

“Hahaha! Hahahaha! How dangerous! How risky!”

Chen Xiaolian forced himself up and first pulled Soo Soo up. After checking up on her, he handed the unconscious Alice to Qiu Yun.

“Guild Leader, back then I saw you... throw money to hit those terracotta soldiers?” Chen Xiaolian could not contain his curiosity. “What kind of skill is that? A skill that uses money to smash your enemies?”

Qiu Yun glanced at Chen Xiaolian and replied lightly. “That is my skill, Metal Burst. Any metal that I put my hands on can be turned into bombs and set off. Unfortunately, not all battlefields will have metal items. Take today’s damned place as an example, those terracotta soldiers are all made of stones. That is why I made it a habit to carry enough coins with me to be used as weapons.”

Metal Burst?

Coins?

Chen Xiaolian stared with wide-opened eyes.

This skill sounds extremely powerful eh!

Qiu Yun then glanced at Chen Xiaolian again. “You have seen my skill. For fairness sake, shouldn’t you tell me what your skill is?”

“My skill?” Chen Xiaolian thought about it before smiling bitterly. “If I say my skill is the Great Art of Demonic Dissolution, would you believe me?”

He thought that this joke from him would give Qiu Yun a shock. However, after hearing that, Qiu Yun’s face turned very strange.

“Great Art of Demonic Dissolution?” A peculiar look flashed through

Qiu Yun's eyes. "Could your skills be... something akin to the purification of personal attributes?"

It was Chen Xiaolian's turn to be surprised!

He... knows?!

Chapter 64: Not A Good Person

Qiu Yun deeply regarded Chen Xiaolian for a moment, but he did not say anything. Chen Xiaolian wanted to ask about it; however, he was uncertain how to. Qiu Yun on the other hand, appeared to have no desire to continue their conversation. Qiu Yun rose up and patted off the dust on his body. Then, he patted Alice's face.

Alice remained unconscious, her head tilted over to the side and some bloodstains could be seen on her face.

Qiu Yun produced a Healing Type Beast Blood and stuffed it into Alice's mouth. Then, he turned to look at Soo Soo.

"This little sister of yours seems rather unusual," The corners of Qiu Yun's mouth curled up, bringing with it a profound smile. He looked at Soo Soo. "It seems... you can see some things that we cannot?"

Chen Xiaolian was surprised. He too, looked at Soo Soo and said in a low tone. "Soo Soo, what is going on? Can you really see something?"

"En," Soo Soo nodded. "Those things have a light on their bodies."

"You... how do you see it?" Chen Xiaolian frowned.

"It is simple, I just close my eyes and I can see it."

Close eyes? See?

To be saying those words within this tomb passageway, it would make anyone feel uneasy.

What kind of ability is this?

Qiu Yun's eyes flickered and he narrowed his eyes. He stared at Soo Soo for some time before slowly speaking out. "What is your skill? Is it of the Fire Division?"

Chen Xiaolian was surprised!

Qiu Yun was correct again!

"It seems that the level of your Fire Division's skill is very high," Qiu

Yun said with a rather emotional tone.

“What does this have to do with skill level?”

“It is not just the skill level. It also relates to the skill type,” Qiu Yun said softly. “Clearly, this little sister of yours possesses a fire element skill of the Elemental Division.

Additionally... the bodies of Players or Awakened ones that possess elemental skills will be affected by the respective element. In other words, in the process of using their skill, the nature of their body will be influenced by the skill.

She is of the fire element. Thus, she will gradually adopt a constitution that adheres to the fire element. This is an underground palace, the monsters here... do you still remember those Zombie Wyrms? Those Zombie Wyrms fear fire the most and are very sensitive to fire.

On the other hand, someone with a fire element type of constitution will be very sensitive towards them.

The reasoning behind this is very simple. A person with high resistance against heat would usually feel sensitive towards cold air in cold places. On the other hand, a person with a high resistance against cold would usually feel very sensitive towards heat in hot places.

Thus... this little sister of yours... heh heh!”

Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips to the side. He looked at Soo Soo to see her nodding her head. She slowly said. “Xiaolian oppa, as long as I close my eyes, I will be able to see many strange colours within the darkness. Some are clear, some are blurry.”

“It is related to the distance,” Qiu Yun quickly spoke out. “Those far away will seem a little blurry while those nearby will seem clear.” He laughed. “I did not expect your little sister to have this skill. It will be helpful to us.”

At that moment, Alice who was by the side suddenly groaned a few times. She slowly woke up. Once her eyes opened up, she immediately reached out for her sword. Finding nothing, her face changed and she

abruptly bounced up from the ground.

Qiu Yun held onto Alice's wrist and spoke in a deep voice. "Do not panic, it is us."

Seeing Qiu Yun, the killing intent in Alice's face dissipated and she exhaled. Then, her face changed again. "Where are my team members?"

Qiu Yun stared straight into Alice's eyes without saying anything. Alice understood immediately and her face turned gloomy. "They... all?"

"En," Qiu Yun nodded and smiled bitterly. "Truth be told... you should not have participated in this instance dungeon. I recall that your guild should still have one chance for exemption. This eastern culture's background story is not suitable for you people from the western world."

"... I had no choice," Alice shook her head. "I had encountered an incident, so..."

She suddenly glanced at Chen Xiaolian and chose not to continue. She vaguely muttered. "At any rate, I have my reasons why I must participate in this instance dungeon." Her body shook. "I am the one who killed Charlie and Mars."

"That Mars is a coward. Even if he is a magician, you should not have recruited someone like that," Qiu Yun frowned. "For any guild, someone with such a poor character will end up dragging down their companions, regardless of how good his abilities may be."

"I had no choice," Alice gave a strained smile. "He is the only Awakened one I can find with dark attribute magic. In an instance where exploration of tombs is necessary, he could have given me a great deal of help."

Qiu Yun's face remained calm. "All right, then. You are not a newbie. Having experienced the vicissitudes of so many instance dungeons, you know that having team members die is something very normal. I will not say anything to comfort you. I only hope that you can understand that if you are too hard on yourself, then this state of mind will likely get you killed the next time we face danger."

Alice stood up and took a deep breath. She pulled out a dagger and

gripped it in her hand. "I understand! Qiu Yun! I do not need these advice from you!"

She looked at Qiu Yun. "However, I am now the only one left from my team. So... the alliance that I had proposed, will you accept?"

Qiu Yun looked at Alice and laughed. "It would be my utmost pleasure."

Next, the two Guild Leaders quickly exchanged information.

Alice described out everything that she had experienced and the places and terrain that she had went past. Qiu Yun did likewise, telling her everything regarding the places he went through back then. Both of them made their comparisons and Qiu Yun finally made a speculation after thinking about it.

"Clearly, the places that you and I had travelled through both began from outside the instance dungeon leading into the mausoleum. Judging from the arrangement of directions, both our forward directions lead deep to the centre of the mausoleum... generally speaking, I believe that the key factor in the quest to complete this instance dungeon must lie in the centre location of this underground Qin Mausoleum. Perhaps, it is in the main tomb."

Qiu Yun continued softly. "Unfortunately, the final quest prompt for this instance dungeon has yet to be issued. All we can do for now is guess."

"Conventionally speaking, the description for the final quest of an instance dungeon will only be transmitted after the Players arrive. Heng, I hate this large-scale instance dungeon the most," Alice gave a sigh.

"Regardless, we can only go forward," Qiu Yun peered straight at the passageway before him and could only see darkness. There was no end in sight. "Currently, we do not have a point of reference for direction. In addition... I have also made some tests after entering; compasses and the likes would not work. We have been going around within this underground labyrinth to the point where our sense of direction had been rendered a complete mess. Heaven knows which path we need to take to arrive at the main tomb. If we should arrive at a fork in the passageway,

we may end up going the wrong way. When that happens, we may end up wasting hours going in circles around this underground labyrinth, or possibly even days.”

“Then, what can we do?” Alice frowned. “After entering the instance dungeon, the radar could no longer be used!”

“Thankfully, I now have a way,” Qiu Yun laughed out in a light tone. “Usually, the closer one gets to the centre of the instance dungeon, the more monsters one would encounter. We have no way of identifying the direction. However, I just realized that my team member just happened to have the ability to sense monsters.”

After saying that, he turned to look at Soo Soo.

...

... ..

Four people moved forward in a row through the passageway. After walking for nearly half an hour, they found that the passageway was gradually becoming more narrow.

With the exception of Soo Soo, the other three became hesitant. However, Soo Soo maintained an expression of certainty. According to her, she could sense a high number of monsters located right ahead.

In terms of position, they should be getting closer towards the centre area of the instance dungeon.

However, the passageway continued to become smaller.

Originally, the four of them were moving side by side. But later on, not even two could move side by side. Due to Soo Soo’s small stature, Chen Xiaolian was still able to pull her with him as he ventured forth. As for Qiu Yun and Alice, they could only follow from behind.

Finally, after a few more minutes, the passageway came to an end!

Looking forward at the stonewall that signified a dead end, Alice frowned. “Didn’t you say we are in the correct direction?”

Qiu Yun turned to Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian then turned to look at

Soo Soo to see her shook her head. "I do not know. I can only feel that this direction leads to many colours."

"Our direction is correct. That means there will certainly be other paths to go around," Qiu Yun wrinkled his brows.

"Maybe there is a secret mechanism," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "There are too many stories that describe the existence of secret mechanisms within this type of underground mausoleums. Perhaps there is a hidden door or passageway that we failed to discover?"

"If we are to backtrack, there is only one way. It is one that connects directly to the tomb where we had to fight for our lives," Alice frowned. "However, that area had already collapsed. As for this path, we did not find any forks along the way."

"We must have missed something," Qiu Yun sighed. "There is no choice, we will slowly backtrack and search around."

"There is not much time left!" Alice's face turned grim. "Generally, there would not be too much delay between our time of arrival and the Players! We need to quickly find a way out! This is a dead end! If there are only dead ends on both sides... if the Player is sent to this passageway when they enter...we will not even have a place to run to!"

"How long have we been walking?" Chen Xiaolian suddenly asked.

"Around... half an hour," Alice replied.

"Half an hour," Chen Xiaolian thought about it. "Considering our walking speed, we can cover roughly 8 km in one hour. Half an hour... in other words, the distance between our current location and the tomb we escaped from should be around 4 km.

To thoroughly search for secret mechanisms leading to a secret path in a passageway with a length of 4 km, it would be impossible for us to do it together. We must separate to act simultaneously in order to save time."

Qiu Yun nodded his head immediately. "I agree. Since both ends of this passageway are a dead end, there will not be any monsters. It will be good for us to separate and search around. Each person will be responsible for

one part.”

Alice nodded. “I have no objections.”

Qiu Yun sighed. “I have the fastest speed. I will move to the beginning point near the tomb and begin searching from there. En... Alice, you follow me. You will be responsible for searching the centre area. Xiaolian, you and this little sister of yours will search from here onwards. If anyone finds anything, do not act rashly and seek out your companions immediately!”

After making those decisions, Qiu Yun quickly brought Alice with him and backtracked. They ran back as fast as possible, leaving Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo to search the vicinity of this stonewall together.

After both Qiu Yun and Alice had moved away, Chen Xiaolian who was examining a side of the stonewall suddenly stood up.

He wore a complicated expression as he pulled Soo Soo up. Soo Soo on the other hand, regarded him silently with her pair of big eyes.

“All right, Soo Soo,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “You have been secretly pinching my fingers since earlier on. But, you did not say anything at all. Is there something you wish to talk to me in private? Now that they have left, you can do so.”

Soo Soo’s eyes were a little peculiar. “Xiaolian oppa... I found something strange.”

“Something strange?” Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

“En!” Soo Soo nodded vigorously and stretched out her hand. She slowly opened her small palm to reveal a piece of ... black metal fragment.

“What is this?”

Soo Soo shook her head. “I do not know. When we were walking in here earlier, I picked it up from the ground.”

Metal fragment?

Chen Xiaolian’s brows creased as he regarded the passageway... there were only stone all around him. How could a piece of metal fragment

suddenly appear here? Additionally, there were clear patterns drawn onto its surface.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly realized something. “Why didn’t you say anything earlier?”

Soo Soo raised her head and calmly looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Xiaolian oppa... that Guild Leader, I feel that he... does not have good intentions...”

Does not have good intentions?

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily shocked. Then, he gave a bitter smile. “You are talking about Guild Leader Qiu Yun? I feel that he is quite a good person.”

“I do not know...” Soo Soo’s eyes were seemingly at a loss. “However... every time I get near him, I sense an uncontrollable feeling of terror.”

“Eh?”

“Xiaolian oppa, trust me. My senses are very accurate,” Soo Soo whispered. “Since I was 5 years-old, I will sense this feeling whenever a bad person bullies me. Also...”

She suddenly pursed her lips to the side, revealing an odd smile. “Recently, I was abducted by some bad person. I was able to sense this feeling from that person’s body. It was due to this feeling of terror... that I would wake up to replace that weak idiot! This time was no different. All along the way, that weak little idiot was extremely terrified of Qiu Yun. Thus... I woke up.”

Chen Xiaolian was stunned!

“Xiaolian oppa, I do not know how to explain it to you. However... I know. That Guild Leader Qiu Yun is not a good person.”

Chapter 65: Isolated Secret Chamber

Not a good person.

This was Soo Soo's approach towards Qiu Yun.

Chen Xiaolian's heart instinctively argued against this point of view. The reason was, Qiu Yun's attitude along the way had given Chen Xiaolian the impression that he is quite a good Guild Leader. He took good care of his own team members and even gifted him with the Demon King of Confusion's Axe Skill Book.

Qiu Yun also accepted Soo Soo as a member of the Meteor Rock Guild, allowing her to wear the protective suit reserved for Meteor Rock Guild members.

No matter how one look at it, a Guild Leader like this is a very good one...

Unexpectedly, Soo Soo stated that he did not have good intentions. Additionally, she also could not give any reason.

Merely... intuition.

Chen Xiaolian felt perplexed.

Instinct wise, he did not agree with Soo Soo's statement. However, a voice within his sub consciousness was reminding him to pay heed to Soo Soo's words.

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment before sighing. He brushed Soo Soo's face and whispered. "Soo Soo, Guild Leader Qiu Yun had been taking good care of us. So, until we have proof, I do not want to consider Guild Leader Qiu Yun as an enemy. However... I will keep your words in mind."

Soo Soo looked at Chen Xiaolian, her expression showing some disappointment. She gave a light sigh. "Very well, I know you will not believe me now. However... it will be proven to be true."

"Don't talk about this anymore," Chen Xiaolian waved his hands. "Finding a way out takes precedence."

Soo Soo looked at Chen Xiaolian's back. Her small hands clenched tightly to form fists while those eyes within her small face flickered with determination...

...

... ..

"Found it!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly exclaimed loudly.

After conducting a careful examination for a few minutes, he realized that there was a damaged area somewhere at the top location of the dead end side of the stonewall. It was a very small area amongst the well-constructed stonewall.

The surface of the damaged area... was obviously new!

It seemed to be marks left from using a weapon to pry it open.

As for the black coloured metal fragment, its shape indicated that it was the fragments of a certain weapon.

"Marks made from prying..." Chen Xiaolian frowned and reflected upon it for a moment.

He quickly pulled out a Swiss Army knife from his backpack. Exerting his strength, he stabbed it into the crack within the pried open damaged area. He then applied strength onto his arms and tried prying it.

After testing out several different directions, Chen Xiaolian suddenly heard a "pa da" sound!

The sound clearly came from inside the stonewall.

His heart thumped and he blurted out. "There is movement!"

He quickly pulled out the Swiss Army knife and stared intensely at the stonewall...

The sounds of "ka ka ka" was emitted continuously from within the stonewall. Additionally, the sound itself seemed to be moving; it moved from the top all the way down to both sides.

Chen Xiaolian quickly held onto Soo Soo and retreated a few steps as he stared intently and examined the stonewall.

The sound slowly came to a halt.

“Eh? There doesn’t seem to be any changes?” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “What is going... argh!!!”

Suddenly, the ground below him and Soo Soo and roughly 5 metres of the entire passageway turned over!

After it turned over, all that was left below was a huge, pitch-black hole!

Both Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo fell directly into the hole!

The floor turned a total of 360 degrees and was restored to its original position. The edges where the turn occurred and the rest of the floor returned to its exact position, making it indiscernible!

No more movements could be seen within the passageway that was shrouded with darkness. It was as though no one had been in there at all.

...

... ..

“A a a a a!!”

Both of them screamed out sharply and Chen Xiaolian struggled to hold Soo Soo close to his chest as the two of them slid downwards.

Indeed, they were sliding down and not falling.

The both of them seemed to have fallen down a very steep passageway heading downwards.

Unfortunately, the passageway has a square shape. On the way down, Chen Xiaolian’s head, shoulders and knees had to endure being slammed upon countless times.

He struggled to hold Soo Soo close to his bosom so that this delicate little loli does not get hurt.

In the dark passageway, the degree of steepness was certainly beyond

45 degrees. Chen Xiaolian felt that he had been turned over and was falling down head first.

After screaming sharply for a good one minute as they descended, the two of them rolled down the passageway and fell heavily onto a flat surface area!

As they fell out of the passageway, their momentum caused Chen Xiaolian who was still holding onto Soo Soo to slide a considerable distance away!

This was a stone platform!

Its size was probably around 5 to 6 square metres. The two of them fell and slid all the way to the edge of the stone platform. Thankfully, Chen Xiaolian's reaction was fast enough. He quickly thrust the Bone Crusher Axe onto the ground and stopped them from falling down the stone platform!

Having reached the edge of the stone platform, the first thing Chen Xiaolian's eyes saw was... below the stone platform...

En, it was not that deep. It was probably no more than three metres or so in height, about the same as the height as a second floor.

However, what lied below the stone platform...

Was something that flowed faintly, resembling a flowing river!

"Underground river?" Soo Soo leaned over.

"No, it is not river water," Chen Xiaolian's face suddenly turned ugly to the extreme. "It's mercury!"

He raised his head: This seem like a secret chamber...

A very big secret chamber!

The searchlight affixed to Chen Xiaolian's hat had long since been smashed. Chen Xiaolian turned on a flashlight and directed it around... they were in a square shaped chamber about the size of a football field!

The terrain here caused him to gasp!

Looking up, he could see that the chamber's ceiling was flat. The distance between the ceiling and the ground was about 7 to 8 metres.

Within this secret chamber the size of a football field, the ground was split into countless platforms of varying sizes. Criss-crossing gullies filled the area between each platform; and below the gullies was the bottomless, flowing mercury!

It was as though this was a lake of mercury. As for the platforms, they resembled islands!

Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo were occupying a position on the left corner of this square shaped secret chamber. Turning around, he saw that the passageway from which the two of them came out from had already... utterly collapsed!

The stone tiles of the passageway silently dissolved into a viscous liquid and the passageway collapsed together!

As flowing sounds gushed into his ears, Chen Xiaolian could not be bothered to investigate the collapsed passageway. He rushed to another side of the platform and discovered something surprising!

On the walls surrounding this secret chamber...

There were countless holes of various sizes, arranged in a row. The largest were as big as a water bucket, while the smallest were as small as an arm.

Their numbers were extremely high!

In addition, all these holes were pouring out... mercury!

The mercury poured down and flowed into this secret chamber, sending even more mercury into the lake of mercury below the platform!

There were holes on the left side of the stonewalls, right side of the stonewalls... backside of the stonewalls...

Even the front...

Chen Xiaolian used the searchlight to search around.

At that moment, he suddenly caught sight of a figure positioned far away. The figure was on a very big platform located in the centre area of this secret chamber, roughly tens of metres away from him!

It was a person!

A woman!

She wore a black leather jacket. If the searchlight had not shone onto her body, the black leather jacket would have made it difficult to notice her amidst the pitch-black surroundings.

This woman who wore black leather jacket was seated cross-legged on the ground. Her head was drooped down and her long, black hair flowed down. Upon the ground before her, two swords were pierced into the ground. As for this woman, she sat there without making any movements.

“Xiaolian oppa!” Soo Soo pulled Chen Xiaolian with force and pointed to the woman.

“I see her,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. He took a breath and shouted in a loud voice. “Hey!”

The woman seemed to have raised her head. However, the distance between them was too far and he could not see her appearance clearly. Despite that, Chen Xiaolian felt a pair of sharp eyes being casted over!

“Could it be a monster?” Chen Xiaolian’s heart sank. He glanced at Soo Soo to see her shaking her head. “Not a monster... her body does not have the light that the terracotta soldiers have.”

“It is a person?” The corners of Chen Xiaolian’s lips curled. “It seems she is an Awakened.”

The woman seemed to have raised her head to glance at Chen Xiaolian. Then, she lowered her head back and ignored the two of them.

Chen Xiaolian felt that this place was thoroughly bewildering. He gave up on shouting and carefully investigated his surroundings. He went to the edge of the stone platform to make his observations.

Then... his face instantly changed!

Firstly... Chen Xiaolian realized that this was a genuine 'secret chamber'! There was no way in or out!

Secondly... he discovered a particular detail: The height of the mercury below the stone platform was slowly rising!

In other words... the mercury pouring out from the surrounding holes on the stone walls were little by little, little by little, filling in the secret chamber!

As Chen Xiaolian's heart was feeling heavy, he suddenly heard a sound!

Kacha!

That was the sound of stone being shattered!

Chen Xiaolian abruptly turned and saw that the other side of the stone platform that he and Soo Soo were standing on had collapsed! A part of the stone platform the one meter in width cracked off and slipped down onto the lake of mercury!

The collapsing area was still slowly spreading!

Feeling a sense of foreboding, Chen Xiaolian grabbed hold of Soo Soo and rushed to the other side of the stone platform. After determining the right direction, he leapt straight ahead!

A gully with a width of around 4 metres stood between them and another stone platform! Chen Xiaolian held onto Soo Soo as he made the jump and landed onto another uninhabited platform. They then heard a booming sound!

Behind them, the stone platform that they were standing on earlier had completely collapsed! As dust floated in all directions, the stone platform collapsed into the mercury lake!

"Damn it!"

Chen Xiaolian could feel his heart pounding madly. He could not help but feel somewhat parched.

At that point, he heard a voice.

The black clothed woman on the stone platform in the central area of the secret chamber uttered one sentence.

“If you do not wish to die, do not move about!”

Chapter 66: If You Do Not Want To Die, Then Fight

If I do not wish to die, then do not move about?

Chen Xiaolian's mouth twitched – I cannot afford not to!

Seeing that the stone platform was collapsing, should I have just stood there and wait for death?

At the moment, there was still a distance of several tens of steps between them. Chen Xiaolian picked Soo Soo up and took big strides and he jumped forward. He jumped up and down between the stone platforms and was soon able to reach the central stone platform. He then stood before the woman in black leather jacket.

The woman finally raised her head and stared at Chen Xiaolian. Discontent and perplexity could be observed from her eyes.

Dark black hair with a pair of bright eyes; Unlike the big eyes often seen on beautiful girls, her eyes were slightly elongated with corners that turned marginally upwards, exuding a natural charm. Her nose was straight and her lips gorgeous. She displayed flaming red lips, which seemed to indicate that she had applied a sheen of lip-gloss. As for her cheeks, they were pale to the extreme, almost resembling white jade.

Complemented with her tight, black leather jacket, an alluring air would descend upon any who gaze upon her!

This woman gave Chen Xiaolian but one glance before lowering her head again, her eyes directed down towards the ground.

“Awakened?” Chen Xiaolian blurted out nonsensically. However, the woman chose to ignore him.

That was when Chen Xiaolian noticed it. Before the ground that the woman was sitting cross-legged upon was a map!

After carefully examining it, Chen Xiaolian was able to recognize that this was the design map for this secret chamber!

On a large area, lines were drawn, criss-crossing with one another. The lines were clearly etched out using some sharp instrument. While there were some rough areas, the secret chamber that was as big as a football stadium, the mercury lake and the stone platforms were all etched out and put on display there.

On the map, a huge block of area were crammed full of tens of smaller blocks.

“Hey? What are you looking at?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

The other party did not say anything.

“How did you enter this place?”

The other party still did not give any answer.

“Is there an exit here?”

Still no answer.

However, the young woman finally raised her head. Her elongated eyes swivelled to glance at Chen Xiaolian. “Can you please be quiet?”

“...” Chen Xiaolian choked.

The woman pulled out a dagger and etched a cross on a stone platform drawing on the design map.

Chen Xiaolian observed for a moment and found that the location that she had crossed out happened to be the platform that he had arrived on earlier, the one that then collapsed down.

Additionally, there were several other stone platform drawings on the design map that had been crossed off.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly had a thought. “What are you calculating?”

The young woman’s face finally revealed a trace of surprise. “You think I am calculating?”

“En,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Since we are all trapped here, we might as well discuss about it, right? Which Awakened Guild are you from?”

The young woman frowned but did not give any answer. She stared at

the design map and whispered. "Where exactly is the valve..."

Valve?

Chen Xiaolian was shocked. His eyes then lit up. "Did you just say valve?"

"Of course, what else would it be?" The young woman lowered her head and replied instantly. "An instance dungeon that leads us to death would make no sense. Any such trap room scenarios will have a chance for survival. An instance dungeon without a chance for survival that forces us to our deaths cannot be considered a test or adventure, but simply murder."

Chen Xiaolian was shocked!

Despite her cold attitude, there was no doubt that Chen Xiaolian was in absolute agreement with the young woman's words!

There are no instance dungeon that forces us to our deaths! There must be a chance for survival! Otherwise, could it still be called a game? It would be called entrapping people!

"What did you mean when you say valve?" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "Could it be... there is a water port below the mercury?"

"Of course there is," The young woman regarded Chen Xiaolian with disdainful eyes. "Do you not understand the reasoning behind this? If there is no water port, then once this place has been filled with mercury, is it supposed to just sit here and do nothing?"

This is an ancient tomb, not a water plant. The builders prepared the mercury that appeared in here in a large reserve. However, no matter how big their reserves may be, it cannot possibly be endless!

Therefore, there must be a mechanism to distribute it elsewhere.

There must exist a water port valve somewhere within the bottom area of this secret chamber."

"That sounds very reasonable," Chen Xiaolian thought about it. "In that case... where do you think it is?"

The young woman revealed a little frustration as she finally stood up.

As she stood up, Chen Xiaolian noticed that this woman was very tall and slender.

Err... all right! Height has always been my flaw!

The 18-years-old Chen Xiaolian has a height of only 1.7 metres, whereas this young woman...

Beneath her leather skirt were two long leather boots. Despiciously, they actually sported long heels!

Visually speaking, she was one head higher than Chen Xiaolian...

She definitely has a height of over 1.7 metres while barefooted! This was Chen Xiaolian's judgement.

The tight leatherwear outlined the curves on her body, a slim waist and outstandingly curved hips. What caused Chen Xiaolian to exclaim in admiration though... was that this woman was actually not flat chested!

For tall females, especially Chinese, most of them would be flat chested. However, this woman's body had obviously subverted this rule.

Big breasts, slim waist, curved hips... and the two long legs wrapped in leather boots.

This woman's body has the capacity to anger a group of Victoria's Secret models to their deaths!

... That is enough! Now is not the time to ogle at a beauty!

"The valve must be in the water. Additionally, it must be below a stone platform. In other words, as long as we figure out the right stone platform and break it, a leak will occur on the valve. Then..." The woman in black quickly continued. "There are a total of 81 stone platforms. Per my calculations from the moment I arrived, one stone platform will collapse every five minutes."

"Since you have concluded that the waterway is hidden underneath the stone platform, why don't you simply break these stone platforms? Just do so one by one to find the right platform."

The woman in black suddenly used a peculiar expression to look at Chen Xiaolian. She then snorted. “For an idiot like you to participate in an instance dungeon, could it be that the guilds have now lowered the bar for recruitment to such a low level?”

Undoubtedly, those words were very harsh.

Chen Xiaolian became angry. Just as he was about to retort, he suddenly looked at the holes in the walls that were pouring out mercury. He then looked at the mercury lake below the stone platform...

He immediately realized that he had indeed made a stupid mistake!

The story of the crow and the pitcher was something that everyone had heard before.

By throwing stones into a sealed water container, the stone will displace the water volume and cause the water to flow out...

This place, this secret chamber just happened to be a huge sealed water container!

If one were to act recklessly and break down these stone platforms one by one...

Then, the broken stone platform that fell down the lake would be the equivalent of a stone being thrown into the container...

Under such circumstances, if the gamble was to succeed and the water port was found, then everything would end well.

But if... the gamble failed, and they did not find the right one.

Then, due to the excess amount of stones within the lake, the mercury level will rapidly rise up!

It was most likely that it would exceed the height of the stone platform in just moments!

This was not ordinary water!

It was mercury!

If this was ordinary water, being soaked in it for some time was

possible.

However, soaking in mercury...

Haha!

The woman coldly continued. "After every five minutes, a stone platform will collapse. There is probably some mechanism controlling all these. Additionally, my examination of the rate at which mercury flows down reveals that the rate at which the mercury level rises is at 1 centimetre per minute."

Chen Xiaolian quickly moved to the edge of the stone platform and looked down. He quickly said. "There is a distance of around 3 metres between the mercury level and us. En, that means we still have 300 minutes until the surface of the mercury reaches the stone platform!"

After saying that, he suddenly shook his head. "Wrong! A stone platform will collapse down every 5 minutes. The collapsed stone platform will fall down the mercury lake and increase the rate at which the mercury level rises..."

"It seems you are not as idiotic as I thought. I have already made the calculations," The woman in black said lightly. "We have a maximum of 180 minutes of time. In no more than 3 hours' time, the mercury will have reached our feet."

Three hours...

Chen Xiaolian's face was extremely ugly. "I fear we cannot even hold out for three hours. Mercury will evaporate. The air here is toxic."

"Our Physiques have already been strengthened," The woman in black shook her head. "Our level of tolerance will be much stronger. However... we still will not be able to endure if too much time passes. Oh, right. Do you have antidotes?"

Chen Xiaolian's mind lit up.

He immediately produced the All Curing Antidote that Xia Xiaolei purchased for him.

Back then, he had bought a total of 5. After he, Qiao Qiao and Han Bi had taken one each, there were still 2 more in the Item Box.

After pondering about it though, Chen Xiaolian kept the antidotes back – now was not the time to take it. It would be for the best to wait and use them only when necessary.

“Since we are all in the same boat, let us cooperate,” Chen Xiaolian looked at the woman in black.

The woman in black looked down at Soo Soo and her brows pressed together. “I have never seen an Awakened like you who would actually bring a little child together when participating in an instance dungeon... is she your daughter?”

Daughter?!

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes suddenly bulged wide open.

Soo Soo pulled the corners of Chen Xiaolian’s clothes. She raised her small, calm face and used a pair of cold eyes to look at the woman in black.

“You think I could have such a big daughter?” Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile.

“Then, you must be a lolicon, right?” The woman in black asked with a serious tone.

“... NO!!!”

The woman in black waved her hands. “All right, I was just casually asking. No need to take it seriously. Ah, it is almost time!”

Chen Xiaolian noted that she was wearing an oddly shaped watch on her wrist.

“Almost time?”

“It is a surprise,” The woman in black curled the corners of her lips. Both her hands flicked and an elongated sword appeared in both hands!

“Surprise?” Chen Xiaolian observed the swords within her hands and

was suddenly visited by a sense of foreboding.

“Let me inform you, we will not have 3 hours. The reason... every half an hour, a certain refresh will occur...”

Before the woman in black could finish her words, the walls of the secret chamber suddenly wiggled. It then quickly transformed into an oddly shaped body!

A body that was two metres tall, its rocky body was pitch-black with broad shoulders and thick arms. Its body has a humanoid shape and its eyes were faintly glowing with green light!

These things transformed out from the walls and raised their heads to let loose a roar! Then, they brandished their palms as they stepped onto the stone platforms... They all stepped forward from the surrounding stone platforms towards the central area!

It was apparent that their objective was the three people standing on the central stone platform!

Teng!

One of the stone monsters suddenly jumped over, its body sailing past a distance of over 3 metres. It flew past the gullies filled with mercury and landed with a “boom” onto the stone platform that the three of them were at!

“This... what are these things?”

“Monsters refreshed by the system,” The woman in black’s dual swords skimmed down one another, letting off a series of sparks. The corners of her lips were raised in a sneer. “Did you think the system will allow us to sit here leisurely? If you do not want to die, then fight! I only hope that your fighting skills are better than your brains!”

Chapter 67: Is It About To Begin?

After saying that, the woman in black rushed out!

Her body was extremely strong and she was able to reach the stone monster's flank in just a few strides. Stepping to the side, her right leg flew out, lashing upwards. The stone monster that had just made it onto the stone platform ended up being kicked down the stone platform by the kick.

The two swords of hers flashed and they shot out, aimed towards another stone monster's head. The woman in black dashed over and her body soared through the air. As her body was in the air above the stone monster, she made a somersault and pulled out her sword. In the next instant, the stone monster's head fell down!

By the time the woman in black landed, the stone monster had been reduced to a pile of rubble! Once she made her landing, she quickly bent her body downwards even as she focused ahead.

A thick stone arm arced through the air, buffeting a few strands of the woman in black's hair.

The woman in black went into a lying position on the ground; both her legs kicked out and her entire body rapidly slid past the gap underneath the stone monster's body. Her two swords rang out twice and both the stone monster's legs were cut off. It crashed down to the ground and its upper body struggled desperately to crawl. By then, the woman in black had already turned around. She jumped up and delivered a kick onto its head, sending it flying off a distance of over 2 metres and off the stone platform!

In just a matter of seconds, this woman in black had effortlessly killed off three of the monsters!

Chen Xiaolian watched in a dumbfounded manner!

The woman in black turned her head and spoke out coldly. "Seen enough? If you have, then start helping out!"

Chen Xiaolian curled the corners of his lips. Then, he quickly spoke to Soo Soo. "Stay here!"

He produced the Bone Crusher Axe and headed in the direction of another stone platform.

At that moment, stone monsters were being transformed out from all four sides of the secret chamber's walls. Those monsters then began to jump towards the centre area from all directions.

Before Chen Xiaolian were several monsters that had just made a jump from over three metres across the mercury lake. Right after they landed, Chen Xiaolian arrived to greet them. He shouted aloud and the Bone Crusher Axe chopped forward horizontally.

The third move of the Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes, 'Ear Gouger' swept out. Chen Xiaolian then felt a shock running through both his arms! Both his forearms felt numb. Even though the Bone Crusher Axe had successfully hacked apart the waist of the 3 stone monsters before him, Chen Xiaolian could still feel his arms turning numb from the shock!

If he had not been paying extra attention, then he feared that the axe would have slipped out of his hand!

With one attack, he successfully swept 3 of the stone monsters off into the gully. However, Chen Xiaolian immediately realized that the stone monsters were certainly not weaklings! It was obvious that he does not hold the absolute position in terms of strength. Most importantly, however... their bodies were too hard!

A string of sparks burst forth from the edge of Bone Crusher Axe. Chen Xiaolian strained himself to continue carrying the axe and protect the edges of the stone platform. He was able to keep guard over an area of around 5 to 6 metres where he would exert all his strength to deny the stone monsters the opportunity to jump over and get close.

Whenever a monster jumped towards that area, he would quickly rush out to kill it off.

The stone platform he was standing upon had a limited surface area. If the few monsters were able to gain a solid footing upon the platform, then... once they manage to hinder him for just a small moment, even more of the monsters would be able to jump over. Should that happen... such a confined space would lead to him being unable to fight back.

By now, Chen Xiaolian had already used the Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes 5 to 6 times. The ground beneath his feet was littered with gravel; although most of the stone monsters had fallen into the gully after being struck down.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he had begun gasping. A feeling of unease arose within his heart as he delivered his final strike. As he did, he could hear a teeth grinding creaking sound being emitted! Gone was the sharp cleaving feeling that was present when he first began his attacks.

Clearly... after having continuously used it for hacking stones, Bone Crusher Axe had begun to wear down!

The feeling of soreness and weakness within his arms became increasingly stronger and Chen Xiaolian started using both hands to hold the axe. He then hacked down onto the stone monster before him, sending it falling down the stone platform. Chen Xiaolian then staggered and took two steps back, the Bone Crusher Axe placed down on the ground and he panted.

"It seems you are not as weak as I thought."

The woman in black's voice came from behind him. Chen Xiaolian turned around to see the woman standing tens of metres behind him, the ground below her feet too was covered with the broken bodies of the stone monsters. She had already cleaned up all the monsters on her side and was leisurely using the edge of her sword to trim her fingernails.

Chen Xiaolian raised his head to glance at her and was just about to say something when the woman in black opened her eyes and laughed out. "Be careful, they are coming again."

Hastily turning around, Chen Xiaolian saw that three of the stone monsters were leaping over. He bellowed and lifted the axe, cleaving

down onto the one in the middle.

This Head Cleaver strike was executed properly; however, Chen Xiaolian had run out of strength. After the axe cleaved down and split the stone monster's head, it became lodged onto it. Despite trying his best to pull it out with both hands, he failed. A stone monster then launched its fist, which came screaming towards him from his right!

Reluctantly, Chen Xiaolian dodged away. He let go of the Bone Crusher Axe and rolled back by 2 to 3 metres. The stone monster charged forward and stamped down on him. Chen Xiaolian had to roll away awkwardly yet again. As he struggled to get up, he heard the woman in black's voice. "Seize the sword!"

With an air-piercing sound, the sword arrived before him! Chen Xiaolian was shocked and he instantly reached out to grab the handle of the sword. Then, he shouted. "You nearly hurt me!"

Turning his hand, he lashed out with the sword. He was still using the axe moves, but when the sword struck out, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt a difference!

The blade of the sword sliced through the stone monster's body as one would slice through tofu! There was no sense of the resistance generally felt when cleaving a hard object!

With a "ca", the stone monster was split into two! As for the sword in his hand, it remained light to the touch!

"Good sword!"

Chen Xiaolian subconsciously looked at the gleaming light on the blade of the sword.

He had a sudden thought. He struck out with the sword as he faced the last stone monster, slashing out twice in succession!

Sword Skill, Cross Slash, Linked Dual Strike!

Two condensed edges of light were emitted out, turning into the shape of a cross!

It imprinted itself onto the stone monster's body... then, the stone monster's body was abruptly...

Pierced through by the cross shaped light edges!!!

After penetrating through the body of the monster, it continued travelling forward for a distance of 7 or 8 metres before dissipating.

The stone monster turned into a pile of rubble...

"Good item!" Chen Xiaolian's face showed astonishment!

This sword turned out to be so sharp!

Even though I was only using basic sword skill, it could release that much power?

He immediately used his system to subconsciously scan it...

However, the prompt he obtained was:

[Prompt: Unknown equipment, Class: ????. Your level is too low, cannot identify target].

Holy shit!

The woman in black walked over with a slight smile on her face. Her hand flashed out, retrieving the sword from Chen Xiaolian's hand. Before Chen Xiaolian could even react, he heard the woman in black laugh in a soft voice. "Seen enough yet? Shouldn't you pick up your axe now?"

Chen Xiaolian was silent for a moment. He first strode over to retrieve the Bone Crusher Axe, then he turned his head to look at the woman in black. "You..."

He realized that he must have encountered a master! An absolute master amongst the Awakened ones!

"Your strength is not bad," The woman in black curled the corners of her lips. "Just by looking at you, I can tell that you are a rookie – it is rare for a rookie to be able to attain your level of accomplishment. En, although barely, you are now qualified to become my temporary ally – tell me your name, rookie."

“Chen Xiaolian... and you are?”

“My name is...”

The woman in black laughed and was about to say something.

Suddenly...

Chen Xiaolian’s face changed! His system had received a line of update.

[System prompt: Instance dungeon 100 per cent unlocked. Five minutes from now, the Players will arrive].

Five minutes from now...

Players! Will! Arrive!

Chen Xiaolian’s face changed and he turned to look at the woman in black. Her brows puckered and her elongated eyes narrowed. “Is it about to begin?”

Chapter 68: A Very Pleasant Name

The woman in black's expression seemed to have turned different. A faint light flashed through her narrowed eyes. Then, she pursed her lips and smiled as she glanced at Chen Xiaolian. "Are you anxious?"

Chen Xiaolian too, pursed the corners of his lips.

"Rookie, how many instance dungeons have you undergone?" The woman in black seemed to have an increased amount of interest in Chen Xiaolian.

"How could you be so certain that I am a rookie?"

The woman in black laughed. As she laughed, her pair of eyes turned into the shape of crescent moons, a natural pair of smiling eyes – however, the words coming off her mouth were absolutely harsh. "That is because the word rookie is practically written all over your face."

"..." Chen Xiaolian was unable to say anything.

"Veterans who have participated in many instance dungeons will generally have a strong sense of vigilance and impending crisis. Unless they are in combat, they will never waste their stamina nilly-willy; unlike you who carries a big axe with you as you run around – do you have a lot of strength?" The woman in black smiled with a closed mouth. "Also, you were recklessly attacking everywhere you go, launching skills whenever you engage in combat. Don't you know that the usage of skills will end up consuming a great deal of strength? Your axe skill is quite good. However, such a kind of skill is best reserved to be used against those BOSS Class monsters. Using skills to clear off weak mobs, being out of breath now is simply your just desert."

Chen Xiaolian's face remained calm, appearing devoid of anger as he listened attentively. After the woman finished, he nodded. "Any others?"

"Others?" The woman in black pondered before slowly saying. "When you enter an unfamiliar place, do not run around randomly. The first order of business is to familiarize yourself with the terrain. The moment

you arrived, you ran towards me. If I happened to be holding any malicious intent, your corpse would have been refreshed by now. The first thing that veteran Awakened ones do when they meet someone in an instance dungeon is to take precautions. That is done to guard against any ill intents that others may have. Instead, you blatantly came to my side. If I had wanted to kill you, then...”

“Thank you for your warning!” Chen Xiaolian spoke out sincerely. “I will firmly keep your words in my mind.”

“...” The woman in black deeply regarded him. “You are quite the strange fellow. After being reproached so much by me, do you not feel angry?”

“There is nothing to be angry about,” Chen Xiaolian calmly replied. “I am indeed a rookie. To be able to have a master like you impart your teachings to me is something that one could only wish for. Besides, you are not talking nonsense. Every sentence you said is very reasonable. Those experiences are things that money cannot buy. Being able to listen to it means I am lucky. Naturally, I must appreciate it by committing it to memory.”

The woman in black tilted her head as she thought about it – this action of hers was somewhat adorable. Despite seemingly in contrast with her cold, elegant exterior, this action from her gave her a feeling of adorability.

“Who is this little girl to you?”

“Friend... something like a little sister,” Chen Xiaolian slowly replied.

“Are you aware that the struggle for survival within an instance dungeon alone is extremely hard? To have to divide your focus to protect someone else...sooner or later, this action of yours will get you killed.”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “Some things have to be done.”

“I... won’t be a burden for Xiaolian oppa,” Soo Soo who had been maintaining her silence by the side suddenly spoke out in a serious manner. Although her voice was very low, her tone showed conviction.

“Very well, chat time is over,” The woman in black waved her hand and kept the two swords back. It was likely that she had kept it back into the system. She moved to the side of the stone platform and glanced down. Frowning, she said. “It has increased by quite a bit. Back then, many of the stone monsters fell in, causing the level to rise considerably. En, we have half an hour’s time before the stone monsters are refreshed out again.”

Turning around, the woman in black looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Do you have any ideas?”

“Didn’t you condemn me as an idiot?” Chen Xiaolian stroked his nose as he gave a bitter smile.

“Even idiots will have one commendable thought out of a thousand,” The woman in black replied earnestly.

Chen Xiaolian laughed – he suddenly realized that this woman has a very special quality to her. That was... despite her cold and lofty exterior, her harsh way of speaking, there were some moments where she would show a certain naivety.

“I do have some ideas,” Chen Xiaolian walked a few steps forward and pointed towards the design map of the secret chamber drawn by the woman earlier.

“Speak.”

“The stone platforms here, they total to 81, right?”

“Correct.”

“This is the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, a place built by people of ancient times... at least, that is what the background story states. Then, if we are to look at it from a traditional culture’s perspective, does the number 81 mean anything special?” Chen Xiaolian calmly and slowly continued. “The Emperor is also known as the Honoured One of Nine and Five. In the ancient Chinese philosophy of numbers, the number Nine is highly respected. Since this is the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, I believe that we can proceed to solve this troublesome puzzle by using numbers.

The number Nine holds the highest position amongst all. With that, the number 81... means Nine and Nine! The multiple of Nine and Nine is 81, after all.”

“Continue!” The woman in black’s eyes flashed.

“Before I continue, I need you to give me some information,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “The design map that you drew has a few collapsed stone platforms. I need to know the sequence of collapse of these few stone platforms.”

“That is simple,” The woman in black immediately walked over. She knelt down with one knee to the ground and extended a slender finger, which rapidly tapped a few times on the design map. “Here, here, here... and here. That is the sequence. I have been spending my time here thinking about it, trying to find a pattern from the sequence of collapse. I also tried using numbers to proceed but have been unable to find any pattern to it.”

Chen Xiaolian pondered carefully for a moment. He arranged the stone platforms sequence of collapse that the woman in black had pointed out within his mind. Then, he suddenly laughed out.

He turned his attention to the woman in black. “The Emperor, the Honoured One of Nine and Five. The people from ancient times have a preference of separating numbers to Yin and Yang. The odd numbers as Yang, the even numbers as Yin. As for the Emperor, he is naturally of the Yang number. Amongst the Yang numbers, the one with the biggest value is Nine. Thus, Nine holds the most exalted position. As for the number Five within the title of Honoured One of Nine and Five, Five occupies the central position amongst all the numbers.

Think about it, from one to nine, Five happens to be located in the middle position.

Thus, of the numbers Nine and Five, Nine represents an exalted position while Five represents a central position. At the same time, the Emperor also represents the Yang numbers. The Yang numbers are odd numbers, which are one, three, five, seven and nine. A total of Five numbers – thus,

the Emperor had been known as the Honoured One of Nine and Five throughout time.”

“Go on!” The woman in black’s eyes were glinting.

“If there really is a valve port hidden beneath one of the stone platform, then it is the central hub that controls everything within this secret chamber. It is the most critical and important of all places. Thus, it must coincide with the number Nine and Five.”

“The number Nine and Five?” The woman in black frowned. “Then, is it Nine or is it Five?”

“It would be more accurate to ask... which Fifth within the rows of Nine is it?” Chen Xiaolian laughed. “Just look, there are 81 stone platforms. Even though it seemed chaotic, a careful examination will reveal that they are evenly distributed. Due to the difference in sizes, one could easily become confused. Observe carefully, you will see that there is a pattern to their arrangement.

Nine horizontally and nine vertically!

In other words, a horizontal view would result in nine rows. Within each row are nine stone platforms.

Vertical wise, there are nine columns. Each column consisting of nine stone platforms!

Then, the question becomes very simple.

Count horizontally to the Fifth row, and count vertically until the Fifth column.

Coincidentally, this resulting horizontal row and vertical column will cross one another! The location where they cross one another is also coincidentally the Fifth stone platform of the horizontal row and the Fifth stone platform of the vertical column.

Not only that. If one is to view this place from the side, one will still see that... from the northwest angle to the southeast angle, there are also Nine stone platforms. From the northeast angle until the southwest angle,

there are also Nine stone platforms.

And the resulting two lines would intersect at... coincidentally, the same place!

A horizontal line, a vertical line, another line from the northwest to the southeast and one more line from northeast to the southwest... see, this is a ‘米’ (rice) shape.

A total of Four lines, each of which contains Nine stone platforms. These Four lines would intersect together to form the ‘米’ shape! Coincidentally, they all meet at the same location! As for the location of this intersection, its position within each of the Four lines is... the Fifth stone platform!”

“The intersection of Four lines? Why must it be the intersection of Four lines?” The woman in black frowned.

“Because the number Four is very important!

Do not forget, the ones we considered earlier were all Yang numbers. However, besides Yang numbers, there are also Yin numbers. The people from ancient times regarded even numbers as Yin numbers, which are two, four, six, eight. A total sum of Four numbers! Thus, the number Four encompasses all the Yin numbers! The intersection of Four lines thus complements the importance of this ‘Four’ number.”

Chen Xiaolian calmly continued. “To conclude... I believe that the main valve port is located in the most central stone platform of this secret chamber... that is, the one currently beneath us!”

“...”

The woman in black looked on blankly. Then, she looked at Chen Xiaolian. “How did you estimate all that?”

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “If I say I am a cheater, would you believe me?”

“I don’t,” The woman in black solemnly shook her head.

“Very well,” Chen Xiaolian reflected on it. “I have read up on the

ancient explanation for the number Nine and Five. Coincidentally, this place is the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. Considering that this is the mausoleum of the Emperor, I feel that proceeding would require examining the numbers using the principles of the numbers Nine and Five. So... it is part deduction and part speculation.”

“But it is worth trying!” The woman in black looked somewhat excited. “Then, we will knock down this stone platform beneath us!”

Chen Xiaolian pondered. “Do you have any explosives? I did not bring that type of items in.”

The woman in black glanced at him. “...Those words of yours. Those are the words that only a true rookie would say.”

...

Chen Xiaolian held Soo Soo and jumped onto the adjacent stone platform. Then, he witnessed the display of strength from the woman in black!

The woman in black stood in the middle of the central stone platform. Slowly, she knelt down on one knee, took a deep breath and raised her right hand high above her head. She closed her palm to form a fist... upon her fist, a golden sphere of light instantly appeared!

The woman’s fist descended and struck the stone platform beneath.

The golden light flashed out for a moment and instantly flowed into the stone platform.

The woman in black stood up and brushed both hands. She leisurely walked over and lightly leapt over to Chen Xiaolian’s side.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the central stone platform and frowned. “Why is there no reaction... eh?”

Just as the words left his mouth, something happened!

Cracks suddenly appeared on the area of the central stone platform that the woman in black had struck! Golden light could be seen emitting from within each cracks!

Then... without making any noise, the huge stone platform abruptly... shattered down!

It was as though someone had extracted all the liquid within a dough, leaving only the flour, which broke down into powdery bits!

The entire stone platform collapsed down, turning into powder!

Chen Xiaolian watched with wide opened eyes!

By his current estimation, amongst all the people that he had met since he stepped foot into this world of wonders, regardless if they were Players or Awakened ones, this woman in black beside him was certainly... the most powerful one of them all!

Those with great powers that he had encountered before, such as the Wind Slasher Guild's Newton and Autumn Stone Guild's Qiu Yun were all people of superior strength.

However, none of them brought him as much shock as this woman in black had at this moment!

As Chen Xiaolian was staring open mouthed at the woman in black, she suddenly expressed a delighted smile and clapped her hands. "This is it! This is it! You got it right! This is the one!"

After the stone platform collapsed, the bottom area revealed a huge hole! The surrounding mercury flowed over and surged into the huge hole. They flowed down without restraint, forming a gigantic whirlpool...

The level of mercury within the secret chamber rapidly decreased...

"It seems you are much smarter than I expected," The woman in black squinted her eyes and appraised Chen Xiaolian from top to bottom. "I owe you one. If there is an opportunity, I will repay you."

Pausing, she slapped Chen Xiaolian's shoulder forcefully. "You are called Chen Xiaolian, right? I forgot to inform you back then... my name is Miao Yan."

Miao Yan?

A very pleasant name...

1 The word used for 'cheater' here is '蒙', pinyin: 'méng', meaning: cheat cover ignorant.

2 Miao Yan = '妙嫣'. Miao, raw: '妙', pinyin: 'miào', meaning: wonderful. Yan, raw: '嫣', pinyin: 'yān', meaning: good looks. Her name can be loosely translated as Wonderful Beauty.

[Author's notes: Something to address: Regarding how the density of mercury is higher and stone will not sink into mercury... I thank the readers for pointing it out.

I must admit, my own knowledge is insufficient. This is my mistake. En... however, since it has already been written. Everyone... please ignore it... err...

Thank you to the readers for pointing it out. I will be more careful in the future and avoid making such a kind of mistake.

En, I have left the school for so many years after all. Many of my knowledge have been returned back to the teacher...

Shamefully facepalming...].

[TL: Everyone, hear me out... its... magic... yup... magic...].

Chapter 69: Epang Appears

The mercury rapidly poured down the valve port's waterway and the level of mercury within the secret chamber quickly decreased.

The two of them were happy to realize that as the mercury began to pour down the valve port, the mercury flowing down from the holes on the walls also stopped all a sudden! It was likely that a control mechanism was involved in it.

They waited for around 20 to 30 minutes for the mercury to flow away, exposing the bottom area of the secret chamber.

The bottom area was shaped like a bowl, allowing the mercury to flow towards the valve port's waterway that was located at the centre.

Soon, the mercury level reached the bottom. Chen Xiaolian and Miao Yan were pleasantly surprised to finally see the exit for this secret chamber!

At the most bottom right corner of this secret chamber, there was a hole leading to a passageway. Miao Yan jumped down from the stone platform and quickly ran over to investigate it. Pulling back, she laughed. "It really is the way out!"

Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief. He held onto Soo Soo and jumped down before running over.

This walled passageway was circular in shape and it went upwards. However, it was a winding path with no end in sight. Chen Xiaolian produced his flashlight and was about to move forward when Miao Yan stopped him. "What are you doing?"

"Opening the path," Chen Xiaolian replied as a matter-of-factly.

"Your strength is too low. It would be best for me to do it. If we encounter any danger, I will be able to fight back," Miao Yan shook her head.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Miao Yan and smiled. "All right." He smiled as he took two steps backwards, and made a 'you first' gesture.

Miao Yan lowered her head and entered the path. Chen Xiaolian deliberately fell back by about 5 to 6 steps, pulling Soo Soo with him as he too entered the passageway.

The walled passageway was very long, winding about up and down, left and right. It does however, give off the impression that it was headed upwards.

The walled passageway was very narrow. In the end, even one person could barely move through it. Additionally, they were also unable to maintain a straight posture with their bodies. Both Chen Xiaolian and the tall and slender Miao Yan had a difficult time there. On the other hand, the little Soo Soo did not face as much difficulty.

After having walked for nearly a quarter of an hour, Miao Yan who was at the front spoke out. "It seems we have reached the end!"

Miao Yan who was at the front pushed with both hands, pushing open a circular shaped stone board. A faint light from the exterior spilled down and Miao Yan poked out with her head and headed out. Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo quickly followed suit.

The moment they emerged from the mouth of the hole, they caught sight of what lied on the outside and both Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo became shocked!

Even Miao Yan, who was standing to the side was quietly observing the sight before her...

"This... this is..." Chen Xiaolian gasped!

...

What lied before them was a great mountain cavern that was without equal!

The size of it was simply unbelievable! Chen Xiaolian suspected that only by excavating an entire mountain range would it be possible to create such a big underground cavern!

Raising their heads, they were incapable of seeing the ceiling! All that

they would see was the faint fluorescence emitted by some fluorite-like minerals embedded into the structure of the ceiling, seemingly concealed in its design. It shone like the blinking stars and when they saw it for the first time, they believed themselves to be standing under the starry night skies. What a glorious sight!

The mountain caverns area was extremely wide and open, perhaps even vast!

After all, the light from the 'stars' were weak. Thus, the surroundings remained mostly dark.

Even so, no edges could be seen when turning to the left or right!

Perhaps they would not have fallen into such a shocked state if it were only the vast mountain caverns they saw. However, the sight that made their eyes turned wide open was the thing that stood before them...

A massive and grand palace!

The only thing they could clearly see was probably the front hall of the palace! They spread out to observe it and saw that it has a width of hundreds of steps! Made of rammed earth upon stone foundation, it rose high above with a height of 7 to 8 metres! Pavilion buildings could be seen everywhere!

Both sides of the front hall, which stood high, were open, revealing corridors; the eaves of the rooftop were ancient yet strong, and the atmosphere of darkness caused it to exude a certain feeling of coldness.

At the centre was a staircase leading to the top with a width of tens of metres! The markings of a pair of Yin Yang dragons were fashioned onto the stairs. On each side, gigantic, ferocious looking sculptures of stone beasts of ancient times were placed to stand guard.

Atop the flight of stairs were two astonishingly enormous black gates! Exuding a dignified aura of vitality, the gates were shut tight.

Chen Xiaolian had visited the Imperial City before, but the old palace of the Forbidden City pales in comparison to the majesty of this palace before him!

Chen Xiaolian had once visited a movie set and observed the architectures involved in the restoration and construction of the imperial palace. Within the famed movie 'Curse of the Bouncing Breasts', he had witnessed the imposing majesty of the great hall...

However, this front hall before him was at least 2 times bigger than the front hall of the imperial palace within the movie!

This magnificent great hall was like the firmament of the Heavens standing upon the mountain peak, and this mountain interior was like the outer walls of the palace located within this vast underground hole. This grand palace stood before them!

How such a gigantic interior could be excavated within a mountain, how that Heaven like top of this mountain cavern could resist collapsing upon itself; it was as though everything within this space had overturned Chen Xiaolian's knowledge of common sense and laws of physics!

Miao Yan stared at the grand hall before them and was also stunned for at least one minute. She then exhaled deeply. "This... is the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang? How spectacular!"

"Not Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang," Chen Xiaolian's face turned somewhat peculiar and he suddenly whispered in a low tone.

"Encompassing 300 odd li, severing the light of day.

From the north of Mt. Li to the west, straight to Xianyang.

Two rivers dissolve, flowing into the mighty walls.

A tall building for every five steps, a pavilion for every ten steps.

The twisting promenade forms a long circle, eaves peck high into the air.

Each pavilion in its own terrain, the promenade forms the hook of the Big Dipper.

It coils about, bending and twisting, dense like honeycomb structures form a whirlpool, how many hundred thousand pedestals are there.

The long bridge lies upon the lake, yet without the clouds how could the

dragon...”

Hearing that, Miao Yan frowned. “What are you reciting? A poem?”

Chen Xiaolian’s face was one of complexity. Upon it were emotions, of absurdity, of calmness and also a trace of awe.

He took a deep breath and whispered. “Six kingdoms reached their end, the four seas were united, Mt. Shu rose, Epang appeared.”

“What?”

“This is not a mausoleum, this is... Epang Palace!”

Epang Palace!

The palace that had disappeared from history has miraculously appeared before them!

...

...

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian was very clear on the documented history of Epang Palace. The First Emperor devoted all the manpower of his kingdom, expending who knows how many labour forces, porters and craftsmen to create this city of wonder! For this massive construction project, Qin Shi Huang poured in every last work force in his nation, spending half his life only to have it remain incomplete! After Qin Shi Huang’s death, it too accompanied the dynasty in its destruction and disappeared from history. It was said that the King of Chu burnt down this city of wonders...

However, that city of wonders have now appeared before me?

This...

What son of a bitch logic is this?

“My History teacher will be angered to death,” Chen Xiaolian suddenly let out a bitter smile.

Then, Chen Xiaolian suddenly made his move!

“Damn! I must not throw away this opportunity!”

He quickly retrieved a mobile phone from his backpack: En, as expected, there is no signal!

That is all right!

Opening the camera function, he turned around and entered selfie mode. He had his back facing the grand palace, ensuring both his head and the background was inside the shot, then he tuned the angle...

V-sign pose, Lucky Cat pose...

In one breath, this fellow took 17 to 18 pictures!

“... Are you done taking pictures?”

Miao Yan asked in a clearly restless manner.

“Soon! Soon!” Chen Xiaolian made a funny facial expression and took another picture before contently keeping the mobile phone. He thought to himself: When I get out, I will show it to Qiao Qiao and Roddy. Those two will certainly be shocked!

“If you are done, let us go!” Miao Yan pointed towards the great doors atop the stairs of the great hall. “I think... the final instance dungeon quest must be inside. An Emperor must certainly reside inside the Imperial Palace.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Soo Soo. He pulled her over and whispered. “When we enter later, you must stay close to me no matter what happens. Understand?”

Soo Soo’s expression remained calm and she nodded.

Xiu Xiu look calm and nodded.

The three of them moved forward. After walking over tens of steps, they took their first step upon the staircase...

Suddenly, a prompt appeared in Chen Xiaolian’s system view!

[Prompt: You have entered the final area of this instance dungeon. Instance dungeon’s final quest unlocked: Defeat the guardians and seize the soul essence of Qin Shi Huang to prevent Qin Shi Huang’s

resurrection! Note that this instance dungeon has an A Class difficulty level. After the instance dungeon is completed, the calculation for the reward will be based on the degree of completion and contribution. Condition of failure for this instance dungeon quest: One, Player is killed. Two, Qin Shi Huang is resurrected. If any of the above conditions are met, the instance dungeon will be judged as a failure. You will receive the penalty for failing to complete instance dungeon].

After seeing this line of prompt, his face changed. Raising his head, he saw that both Soo Soo and Miao Yan had a different expression on their faces. Clearly, they too had accepted this prompt.

[Prompt: Players have already entered the final area, the countdown for Qin Shi Huang's resurrection had begun. Time remaining until Qin Shi Huang's resurrection, 197 minutes and 28 seconds. Countdown continues...]

Damn it!

Chen Xiaolian felt as though his head was about to explode!

Miao Yan and Chen Xiaolian turned to look at one another, both their faces turning grave!

There were 2 important factors in this prompt: Firstly, the damned countdown. There was only slightly more than 3 hours of time!

The second factor was of higher importance: Players have entered Epang Palace!

Chen Xiaolian was clear that those considered as Players by the system were not only those who 'arrives'. The system viewed everyone who entered the instance dungeon as Players.

These people who were stated to have entered... Were they Awakened ones or were they the real Players?

None of them knew!

When the three of them were trapped in the mercury secret chamber, they had received the prompt stating that Players had entered!

“Do not dawdle, let us hurry and go up! Heaven knows how much of the quest have been completed by those who entered!” Miao Yan’s face was one of imposing grimness. She quickly leaped up the stairs in frenzy as Chen Xiaolian followed from behind.

In one breath, they reached the top of the stairs. There they caught sight of something astonishing.

Beneath the main gate of the great hall lied 7 to 8 corpses!

There were both males and females. A mere glance at the way they were dressed revealed that they were participants of this instance dungeon – however, it was unknown if they were Players or Awakened ones.

These people’s state of death were extremely miserable. That was especially true for the one closest to Chen Xiaolian. The corpse of a man near his feet had its head completely flattened, leaving a mashed mass. Red blood and white brain matter were all jumbled together within that mess!

Some others had their bodies pierced with several spears. One of them was far worst off, as he was shot and pinned on the surface of the stonewalls. His entire body was pinned up high, akin to a hedgehog.

“Obviously, they were all killed by the monsters defending this instance dungeon. These monsters must be of the Qin terracotta soldier type,” Chen Xiaolian said quickly. “The arrows on their bodies, the spear weaponry, they are all the standard of the Qin army. En... they are all also made of stone.”

Chen Xiaolian picked up a stone spear that happened to be pierced into the ground. Weighing it for a moment, he felt its weight bearing down on his hands. In addition, it was also very sharp.

“We will talk after entering!” Miao Yan narrowed her eyes. “I must complete this quest! Regardless of what monster it is, any who blocks my path will die!”

After saying that, this woman walked forward and delivered a kick onto

the 5 to 6 metres high, gigantic black coloured gate!

Boom!

Following the impact of her kick, an oppressive roaring sound rang out! One could only imagine how much power lied within this kick executed by this woman!

But...

The gate remained immobile!

1 The movie 'Curse of The Golden Flower' starring Chow Yun Fatt and Gong Li. The reason it is also known as 'Curse of the Bouncing Breasts' is because... them breasts stole the show... boing!

Also, the literal translation of the movie title is actually 'The Whole City Is Clothed In Golden Armour'. Likewise, the literal translation for what the author wrote is... 'The Whole City Is Filled With Bouncing Breasts'. Boing!

2 A poem about Epang Palace by poet Dumu from the Tang Dynasty. Six kingdoms reaching their end refer to the other 6 states of the Warring States Era that was conquered by Qin, thus unifying the (four seas) world. My head hurts...

3 He is referring to the Players who 'arrives' by taking over NPC bodies.

Extra: Epang Palace is a palace built by Qin Shi Huang. However, archaeologists concluded that it was never completed.

Chapter 70: Let Us Undress!

“What the Hell?”

Failing to kick open the gates, Miao Yan narrowed her smiling eyes and regarded the gate. She lifted up her leg to deliver another kick, but Chen Xiaolian quickly stopped her from behind. “Ancestor! Stop kicking! If this gate could be so easily kicked open, then these few people would not have died here.”

At that moment, a change suddenly happened to the statue of a giant beast located to the left of the gates.

The paws of the giant beast was originally pressing down on a stone sphere. That stone sphere abruptly changed into an hourglass!

The round shaped hourglass was divided into two layers, one up one down. The sand in the upper layer slowly flowed down...

“Look! This must be a form of timer,” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile.

As expected!

The system instantly sent out a prompt!

[Prompt: Gate Blockade of the Imperial Mausoleum Palace of Qin has been activated. Please enter the Imperial Palace within 5 minutes. Failure to comply will result in the attack by the defending Qin soldiers. Countdown begins...]

“Five minutes,” Chen Xiaolian’s face turned bitter. “It seems that these unfortunate people who died here were unable to find a way to enter before the countdown ends... which resulted in them killed by the Qin armies here.”

Miao Yan’s face twitched and she exhaled. “Could it be... there is a mechanism for entry? Or a storyline that needs completion?”

Chen Xiaolian looked to his left and right. He suddenly whispered out. “I did recall something. However... if I am to say it out, please do not be angry.”

“... Go ahead,” Miao Yan gave him a glance.

“En, then... let us undress together.”

...

“... what did you say? Bastard!”

Miao Yan was greatly enraged. Her eyebrows were raised upwards and she brandished her sword. It seemed that if Chen Xiaolian were to try anything, he would be hacked to death and thrown down a river!

“Don’t! Don’t be angry!” Chen Xiaolian took two steps back as he waved his hand. “Don’t be in such a hurry to get angry, listen to my full explanation first!”

“... speak up!”

“How much do you know regarding the legend of Epang Palace?”

Miao Yan’s pleasantly charming face became slightly blushed and she bit her lips. “Not much.”

“How much is not much?”

“Not much means...” Miao Yan gritted her teeth and stared at him. “I do not know a thing about it! Happy?!”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “As I thought.”

Seeing Miao Yan’s glare towards him, Chen Xiaolian chose to not be anxious. He continued slowly. “Epang Palace is a legendary palace that Qin Shi Huang built by mobilizing all the forces of his dynasty. I must first tell you this.”

“En, and then?”

“That Qin Shi Huang is the first emperor in history. The people who made a sear in history, they all have rather special way of thinking. When it came to the construction of this Epang Palace, Qin Shi Huang too had a special design for it,” As he spoke, Chen Xiaolian pointed towards the gates and continued slowly. “Firstly, it is said that the gates of Epang Palace is different from the norm.”

“En?”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “In the process of unifying the world, that Qin Shi Huang committed who knows how much massacres. Additionally, there were also those states that he conquered. It was unknown just how many assassins they have sent to attempt to assassinate this great man. There is no need for me to cite others, you should at least know of the story of Jingke stabbing Qin Shi Huang, right? The wind blows, the river freezes. The hero fords, never to return! The dagger is revealed at the end of the map . You should have at least heard of this story before, right?”

Miao Yan narrowed her eyes. Despite maintaining an indifferent expression, her eyes could not help but reveal traces of embarrassment. “You... just say out what you know! Don’t keep asking me!”

“Qin Shi Huang made too many enemies. In order to prevent assassins from entering the palace to cause him harm, it is said that he made a special design for the construction of Epang Palace.

Most of the assassins were disguised as messengers or envoys, wearing flexible armour while hiding sharp blades within their chest.

In order to prevent others from secretly bringing in weapons and wearing flexible armour into the palace, Qin Shi Huang made use of a very big slab of magnetic stone in the creation of the gates of Epang Palace.

Also known as iron attracting stone.

This palace’s gates were created using magnets. That way, when walking past these gates, anyone who hides sharp blades within their chest or those who wear flexible armour will be completely exposed!”

“You mean to say... these gates were created using magnets?” Miao Yan frowned. “But what is so great about magnets? Even if it were sacred iron, my kick would still be able to kick them open! But, these gates are so hard...”

“Apparently, the legends are not exactly accurate,” Chen Xiaolian glanced at the hourglass. He increased his speed and said quickly. “The

part about being made from magnet may be unreliable. However, the key factor in this legend is not the magnet. It is about hidden items: Those who hide sharp blades within one's bosom, or wears iron armour cannot enter!"

Miao Yan was speechless.

"In other words, anyone carrying metal would be unable to pass through these palace gates. This is my deduction," After saying that, Chen Xiaolian looked at Miao Yan and said slowly. "If it is only magnet, hacking it apart is feasible. However, look at all the corpses on the ground. I believe that these people are not weaklings. Even if they were not as strong as you, could they not cut open the gates? But they have all failed, thus dying here. Clearly then, the key factor is not about the material.

Instead, it lies in what restrictions are imposed by the gates!"

"Restrictions," Miao Yan's face showed hesitation.

"En, legends are legends after all. And this is only my deduction. I dare not guarantee that it is definitely correct. However... there is no harm in trying," Chen Xiaolian glanced at the hourglass again. "There is not much time left! It is best if you do not think about using brute force to break through the gates. Since the system had set a restriction here, brute force alone will not solve it. No matter how strong you may be, you still cannot beat the system! The way I see it, this is not something that can be solved by brute force. We can only think of ways to comply with the restrictions in order to enter through the gates."

"According to your deductions, we cannot bring any metal inside?" Miao Yan narrowed her eyes, her face blushing red.

"Merely a speculation, but there is no harm in trying," Chen Xiaolian replied seriously.

Miao Yan suddenly kept the two swords back into the system. She then gritted her teeth and casted a look at Chen Xiaolian. "There is also metal on you, right?"

Chen Xiaolian placed the Bone Crusher Axe into the system and smiled. He then untied his leather belt and threw it down the stairs.

He also took off his coat – there were some metal buttons on the coat.

As for the items within his backpack: mobile phones, Swiss Army knives, etc. They were all placed next to the stairs.

He examined himself for a moment and determined that there were no metal objects upon himself. Under Miao Yan's watchful gaze, he walked before the gates and extended his hand to push...

Amidst the monotonous sound of chafing stone boards, a small gap appeared between the gates!

Chen Xiaolian forcibly pushed open the gates and stepped foot inside...

Miao Yan's eyes flickered and she immediately followed suit. When she reached the front of the gate however, an invisible force propelled her back out despite the fact that she was standing before the gap!

Miao Yan took two steps back and stood right there. She stared with wide-opened eyes at Chen Xiaolian who was standing inside.

Chen Xiaolian was already calling Soo Soo over. "Come!"

Soo Soo did not have any metal objects on her person. The little girl's face expressed a smile and she walked inside, walking into Chen Xiaolian's arms.

This caused Miao Yan to become stunned.

Watching Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo who were standing inside, she bit down on her lips. It appeared as though there was a great struggle within her heart.

Finally!

Without saying anything, she quickly unzipped the zipper on her leather clothes – metal zipper.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes watched as this woman took off the leather clothes. That unrestrained body, those exquisite curves, once they were

broken out from the restraints of the tight leather clothes, suddenly...

At that instant, a thought flashed through Chen Xiaolian's mind.

This tall woman's body, she looked even better now compared to when she was wearing leather clothes!

Underneath the leather clothes was a tight, black coloured, elastic clothes. It was extremely thin and stuck closely to her body. It completely outlined her hot and well-proportioned body!

This was especially true when Miao Yan had bent over to take off her leather pants. As she bent down, one look at the raised curved and ripe buttocks caused Chen Xiaolian's face to turn red involuntarily.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt someone tugging his hand. Lowering his head, he saw Soo Soo raising her head, staring at him. Her small lips were pursed to the side, showing a look of discontent.

Chen Xiaolian was suddenly visited by a feeling of being caught red handed. He quickly turned his head away, not daring to look anymore.

After taking the leather clothes off her body, all that was left on her was the tight, black coloured, elastic clothes.

Although those clothes completely covered her, it still gave off a hot and sexy look. Standing before Chen Xiaolian, Miao Yan seemed unable to keep herself collected. Both her cheeks were flushed red and she gritted her teeth, speaking out in a low voice. "What are you looking at!"

Chen Xiaolian averted his eyes. Miao Yan then took a deep breath and produced a cord. She used it to tie her long hair up into a ponytail – After brushing her hair aside, her sleek face was revealed. Chen Xiaolian could not help himself and glanced at her again.

Miao Yan walked forward through the gate. This time, nothing impeded her way.

After she walked through the gates, the gates suddenly shut itself slowly.

Seeing Miao Yan walk over, Chen Xiaolian mumbled something out.

However, due to his voice being too low, Miao Yan was unable to clearly hear what he said. She frowned and asked. “What did you say?”

“... nothing,” Chen Xiaolian quickly lowered his head.

His heart was terrified... thank goodness she did not hear it!

Because, if Miao Yan was to hear what Chen Xiaolian had said, he feared that she would throw a fit on the spot!

What Chen Xiaolian said was...

“It turns out... not wearing bra...”

...

Miao Yan did not catch those words, however Soo Soo who was by Chen Xiaolian’s side heard them clearly. The little girl looked up curiously at Chen Xiaolian. “Xiaolian oppa, how do you know that?”

“Err... you will know when you are older.”

Soo Soo frowned and thought about it thoroughly. “The sister there did not have any bumps ah.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face turned frantic. “I told you, you will know when you are older! Be obedient and don’t just ask randomly!”

1 Jingke’s assassination attempt on Qin Shi Huang is one of the more well-known attempts on Qin Shi Huang’s life.

‘The wind blows, the river freezes. The hero fords, never to return!’ is a song reputedly sang by Jingke.

‘The dagger is revealed at the end of the map.’ Jingke was able to get close to Qin Shi Huang on the pretext of gifting him a map and other valuables. A poisoned dagger was hidden inside the map scroll, revealed only after opening the end of the map. (Maps are very valuable at the time btw.)

Chapter 71: Peerless God of Slaughter

Fearing that Soo Soo might ask more, Chen Xiaolian quickly pulled her inside.

After passing through the gates, they were now in the front hall of Epang Palace. It was shaped like the character 'T'.

At the very centre of this long, front hall was a giant three-legged ding !

One glance at it caused both of Chen Xiaolian's eyes to shine brightly. He rushed over using big strides and extended both hands to feel it. He patted and knocked upon the ding that has a height surpassing his, his eyes transfixed. He could not help himself and gave a low sigh. "A good treasure, a good treasure!"

This item was two times bigger than the largest ding unearthed, the Simuwu Ding ! Simuwu Ding was only 1.3 metres high whereas this one was higher than Chen Xiaolian by a head!

Resting upon three legs, its handles protruded outwards and its four sides stood upright!

Should this item be brought outside... it would be considered priceless!

However, dings have always been reserved by the ancient dynasties for important ceremonial events. Considering how big this ding is, why has there been no mention of it? It is also not recorded in any literature works.

Chen Xiaolian walked around this giant ding twice and attempted to find inscriptions upon its surface. After one round of examination, he only found patterns and no inscriptions.

"This ding does not even have inscriptions... how strange."

Seeing this, Miao Yan became curious and asked. "What are you looking for by leaping up and down? Is there anything weird with this big pot?"

... Big pot?

Chen Xiaolian's mouth tilted as he turned to look at Miao Yan. He gave

a bitter smile. “Don’t spout nonsense! What do you mean big pot? This is a ding! It is a ritual object for the people of ancient times.”

He continued in a low whisper. “At present, the biggest ding to be discovered is the Simuwu Ding. Upon the surface of the ding are the three inscription letters ‘Si Mu Wu’. It was created by a King of the Shang Dynasty to be dedicated to the worship of his mother. After his mother’s death, a temple was given the name Mu Wu.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian frowned. “That is why, most dings will have inscriptions on them to represent what it was used for. This one though, its shape complies with the standards for ritual objects and yet is missing the inscriptions... its exact use is unknown. There is something else...”

Chen Xiaolian’s face suddenly turned peculiar. “Ding was used for worship rituals, but this is the front hall of an Imperial Palace! This should be the place for Qin Shi Huang to convene with his ministers. Why put a ding here?”

“Is there anything wrong with that?”

“Everything about that is wrong,” Chen Xiaolian spread out his arms. “What is the front hall? It is the equivalent of the living room for the Imperial Family. The living room should be decorated with items like incense burners or copper lamps. Who would place an item meant for worshipping the dead or the Heavens in the living room? But the key point remains the fact that it does not have any name.”

Miao Yan waved her hand. “It is just a broken copper cooker. Who cares about it? Let us hurry up and go inside.”

After saying that, Miao Yan stepped away as she headed into the great hall.

Chen Xiaolian though, kept looking at the giant ding a few more times. A feeling of wrongness gradually increased within his heart. Observing this four-sided ding for an extended period of time caused his heart to feel fearful. It was as though an indescribable atmosphere of ghastliness was being exuded by this ding.

While he was in a daze, Soo Soo tugged the corners of his clothes.

The calm expression was no longer there on Soo Soo's small face. She stared at the ding with an expression of dread. It was as though she wanted to back away but was trying her best to endure it. She kept pulling Chen Xiaolian's clothes. "Xiaolian oppa, let us hurry up and leave... this thing, too terrifying!"

Terrifying?

Chen Xiaolian was shocked!

Soo Soo's special sensing ability!

"Soo Soo, what did you see?"

"..." Soo Soo shook her head as she forcibly pursed her lips. "I cannot see it. When I close my eyes... I feel that this item is very, very big." She gestured with both her tiny arms. "It is as though it is bigger than this big room!"

Chen Xiaolian's heart trembled!

Soo Soo possessed the Fire Elemental body type, one that was highly sensitive to the forces of darkness.

... bigger than this great hall?

He suddenly had a thought. He bent his body down to the bottom of the ding and groped about at the bottom area of the ding.

"Ah! It's here!"

Chen Xiaolian exclaimed with a soft voice. He could not see clearly within the dimly lit great hall and could only use his hands to sense it. Finally, he was able to make out two characters.

The written script characters of Qin Dynasty was something that Chen Xiaolian had learnt before in his younger years. Although he did not learn much, these two characters were not too difficult to read. After touching it a few times, he finally made it out.

"Gong Sun?"

Chen Xiaolian frowned.

Gongsun?

What does Gongsun mean?

Is it the name or surname of a certain person?

Why place a ding to worship a certain 'Gongsun' within Qin Shi Huang's great hall?

Gongsun? Is there any super powerful person within Qin Dynasty with the name Gongsun? The surname of the Qin Imperial Family line should be Ying.

Moving away from the ding, he saw that Miao Yan had already moved tens of steps away and had reached the front area of the hall.

A single jade throne was placed up high in the central area.

At the end of the day, Miao Yan remained a member of the younger generation. She stepped forward and brashly sat down on the jade throne. Looking around, she said loudly. "This is Qin Shi Huang's dragon seat? There is nothing special to it, hard and not comfortable at all."

After saying that, she slapped down on the throne with force.

A "pa" sound rang out.

Chen Xiaolian could not discern if it was simply an illusion but he suddenly felt a burst of chilly wind sweeping past the great hall! In just moments, a chill permeated his body and he could not help but shudder. The sense of dread in his heart became increasingly unbearable.

"Quick, come down!"

Chen Xiaolian was unable to control himself as he blurted out those words. He pulled Soo Soo and ran over quickly.

Miao Yan's face turned amiss. She jumped down the throne and stood before Chen Xiaolian, frowning. "You... did you feel it?"

Chen Xiaolian nodded seriously. "There seemed to be a wind? This is a mausoleum; we should expect the unexpected. It would be best for us to

quickly leave this great hall.”

“What is there to fear? It is merely a fight,” Miao Yan snorted. “Didn’t the quest state that there are guardians? It is likely to be this place’s BOSS. As for Qin Shi Huang’s soul essence... if he wants to be resurrected, he must first ask for my permission.”

The three of them went past the throne and moved towards the side of the front hall. After passing through a corridor, they encountered a stone door.

Miao Yan pushed it away and stepped forward. Behind her, Chen Xiaolian remained distracted. He could not help but think back on what the two characters ‘Gongsun’ meant.

In his dazed state, he did not notice the sill located on the ground.

His feet stumbled on the stone sill and he fell forward, crashing into Miao Yan’s back. Miao Yan turned her head and laughed. “Are you an idiot (báichī)?”

At the very moment that those words were uttered, a bolt of lightning flashed through Chen Xiaolian’s mind!

Idiot (báichī)...

Bai!

Bai!

He suddenly turned around and gaped at the hall behind. The giant four-sided ding remained standing in the centre, seemingly emanating a thick, coercing, chilly killing intent!

Bai!

Bai!!

Chen Xiaolian’s face changed and he blurted. “Ah! I got it! It is the Lord of Martial Peace!”

“What Lord of Martial Peace?” Miao Yan knitted her brows. “You seem distracted.”

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and stared at Miao Yan. "I just discovered something. I think I have figured out who the guardian is!"

"Who? Is it this Lord of Martial Peace? What is that?"

"The number one God of Slaughter of the Warring States, the invincible general of the State of Qin, Bai Qi!"

"Bai Qi, the invincible general of the State of Qin, the crazed slaughtering demon, the human butcher," Chen Xiaolian felt his teeth turning cold as he continued slowly. "I was careless. Truth is, Bai Qi's surname is not Bai. He is the descendant of the Qin nobility, the Gongsun clan. Thus... hey!"

Miao Yan frowned. "This Bai Qi... is very powerful?"

"Powerful?" Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "The Warring States produced many great generals. In terms of who was the most powerful, there is no good way of comparing. However, if we are talking about who was the most terrifying, most brutal, then it was undoubtedly him! Bai Qi spent his entire life waging wars for 30 years. Yet, in both official and unofficial records of history, there were no records of him ever having lost.

He emerged victorious in every battle. In addition, he had a terrifying habit... killing prisoners!

In his entire lifetime, the total number of soldiers from the other six states that were slaughtered by him, totalled up to... 1.65 million!

This God of Slaughter, in 30 years, killed 1.65 million people!

Hey! I have read up on historical materials before. During the Warring States Era, if we exclude the State of Qin, the total population of the other six states does not exceed 15 million.

Additionally, due to the number of constant and mutual warfare between all of them, there were more females than males.

Within the population of 15 million people, the number of young middle-aged males added up to no more than one third!

What kind of notion is that? Amongst the total of 5 million young adults, less than half of them were completely slaughtered by Bai Qi alone!

It could be said that the six states exhausted forces and declining strength were accomplished by Bai Qi alone!

Later on, Qin Shi Huang was able to wipe out the other six states and unify the world. Half the credit for that goes to the foundation laid during Bai Qi's generation!

In terms of who has the most accomplishments in war, the most number of kills, the most brutal methods, the amount of prestige that his name holds was second to none under Heaven!

The Warring States Era has four great generals: Bai Qi, Lian Po, Li Mu and Wang Jian. The number of people killed by the other three combined could not hold a candle to the number of men Bai Qi killed!

You ask how powerful this person was?

I only know... after Bai Qi's death, the people from the six states poured wines and greeted one another in celebration, joyful to finally be rid of this terrifying God of Slaughter!"

Miao Yan's face was one of seriousness. "What you mean is... that ding, is to worship Bai Qi?"

"At the bottom of the ding are two characters 'Gongsun'," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "Bai Qi's surname is actually Gongsun. He is a member of the Gongsun Clan, part of Qin nobility. Thus, the name Gongsun makes sense. Additionally... with the exception of Bai Qi, is there any others with the name Gongsun that has a bigger prestige than him? Is there any who is qualified for such a big ding, and have it placed within the Imperial Palace?"

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered. "In his lifetime, Bai Qi's crime of killings were too heavy and was thus lauded as the God of Slaughter. While he was still alive, the mention of his name would cause the people from the other six states to burst into tears of agony.

I believe that when Qin Shi Huang created this Qin Mausoleum, he placed a ding to worship Bai Qi here in order to deter minor spirits.

With the honoured God of Slaughter here, evil spirits or demons can only kneel before him.

Having an honoured God of Slaughter within the Imperial Palace would assure that Qin Shi Huang could continue holding his position as the Honoured One of Nine and Five in the underworld!"

"So, the guardian?"

"Undoubtedly, it must be the God of Slaughter, Bai Qi!"

1 Ding = '鼎', pinyin: 'dǐng'. It is an ancient cauldron with two facing handles. Two kinds of ding exist; a round one with three legs or rectangular one with four legs. It was used for cooking, storage and ritual offerings to Gods or ancestors. [Source: Wiki].

2 Simuwu Ding, presently revised as Houmuwu (Queen Mother of Wu) Ding is a rectangular bronze ding from the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC to 1046 BC), supposedly dedicated to the wife of King Wu Yi of Shang by her son, King Wen Ding.

3 '白痴', pinyin: 'báichī', literally translated to 'clear stupid'.

4 The Chinese believes that the dead can return to protect and bring good luck to the family.

[Author's Note: Err, about the final few words in the last chapter. How did Xiaolian guess that Miao Yan was not wearing bra?

To think that there would actually be some brothers who do not know why. You fellows are too pure.

I will announce the answer then: Bras will have metal in its interior for support. Miao Yan was able to enter the gates after taking off those clothes, but she did not take off any bra. That meant that she was not wearing any. Otherwise, due to the metal within the bra, she would not be able to enter the gates].

Chapter 72: Temporary Alliance

The three of them moved through a long promenade, heading towards the interior of the palace; all the while thinking about how the interior of the palace extended in all directions. On their way, they were able to observe those eye dazzling pavilions.

As they were passing through two bends, they three of them suddenly heard a sound emanating from the front!

The droning sounds of drumbeats!

The sounds of drums stirred, seemingly filled with killing intent! Anyone who came to hear the sounds would be unable to stop their hearts from pounding madly!

Chen Xiaolian and Miao Yan's faces changed and they peered ahead. Suddenly, several figures appeared from the end of the corridor located far away. Those figures hastily ran madly towards them. Surprisingly, there were three figures!

The one in the lead has an average build. He ran in a frenzy, his hands holding onto something with a long shape. Behind him, two fellows followed closely. One of them was covered in blood while the other held a shield in his hand.

It appeared that the three of them were being chased by something. They ran miserably and caught sight of Chen Xiaolian, Miao Yan and Soo Soo who were situated across them. The one in the lead quickly screeched out in a loud voice. "Quickly help us! Otherwise, we will all die here! Quick!"

Chen Xiaolian was able to immediately recognize the person.

Surprisingly, he knew who this person was.

It was the sunglasses wearing Guild Leader Nangong.

Catching sight of Chen Xiaolian and Miao Yan, the three of them immediately ran over. Just as they were running past a bend, a spear flew forward from behind!

Seeing that the one lagging behind was about to be shot, the Guild Leader Nangong dutifully turned around. He roared out at the incoming spear and brandished the long item in his hand, deflecting it away. The spear was successfully parried and it was nailed onto the walls.

A careful look revealed that the spear was made of stone!

The strength behind it however, was very strong and the walls were pierced through!

“Run, Lun Tai!” Nangong dragged the blood-covered fellow to the front.

It was at that moment, Chen Xiaolian and Miao Yan was able to see what lied behind them...

Upon the wide corridor, a group of Qin terracotta soldiers came forward in a series of lines, their pace neat and fast! Walking on the ground, their stony soles released a rhythmic “cha cha” “cha cha” sounds!

The armours, weapons and equipment on these terracotta soldiers were all made of stone.

At the vanguard lied two rows of shield bearing soldiers, their stone shields raised before them. Behind them were spear bearers, followed by crossbow bearing terracotta warriors. There were also a few rows of sword wielding soldiers.

Chen noticed that there was one mounted rider who seemed to be a Qin general. Its face of stone revealed a pair of eyes, which fiercely swept over towards them.

“The one on the horse, could he be that Bai Qi you were talking about?”

Miao Yan was eagerly kneading her fists.

“No, that is the bannered head rider.”

“What head?” Miao Yan frowned.

“Bannered head rider. See how he does not wear any hat on his head; and how his hair is hanging loosely. That is why they are called bannered head rider,” Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile. “They are considered the Imperial Palace’s mounted defenders. Sometimes, they play the role of

honour guards. However, it is said that the defenders of Qin's Imperial palace are all handpicked elites."

Miao Yan remained silent. She suddenly grabbed onto a nearby censer that was as tall as a person, directly picking it up! She then threw it forward!

The censer flew over the heads of Nangong and his men and struck onto the first two rows of Qin terracotta soldiers. Several of them were instantly reduced to pieces of rubble. Even their shields were smashed into smithereens.

Miao Yan's hand movements however, were even faster. Seeing three other censers placed along the promenade, she brought it up and tossed it over as one would with artillery shells.

Those censers smashed down onto the vanguard rows of Qin terracotta soldiers, creating a messy wreck and disrupting their movements.

It was then that Nangong and the others finally arrived before them. Nangong's face were soaked with sweat, his sunglasses had long since been displaced. He turned to both Chen Xiaolian and Miao Yan. "Thanks for your help!"

"Let us fight then!" Miao Yan sneered. However, Chen Xiaolian quickly held her back. "Fight what? Do you have a weapon? Do not forget, we cannot use metals here... our weapons are inside the system, we cannot take them out!"

Miao Yan's face suddenly changed!

Looking at Nongong and his men, she saw that their bodies were bereft of metal objects... the long item within Nangong's hand was actually a Qin terracotta soldier's stone spear that he had picked up from who knows where. As for the shield carried by the other fellow, it was also made of stone, likely taken from the Qin terracotta soldiers.

"Let us run!"

Chen Xiaolian held onto Soo Soo silently. Then, without turning his head, he ran!

His display of decisiveness towards running away was such that it momentarily stunned Miao Yan. Miao Yan's face changed and she moved her leg, chasing after Chen Xiaolian.

Naturally, Nangong and the other two were not slow in their reactions. They too rapidly chased after them.

The movement speed of the pursuing Qin terracotta soldiers behind them was not that fast. Their movements remained neat and rhythmic. They simply strode onwards; however, it appeared as though they were anxious to get rid of them all.

Chen Xiaolian and the others ran with frenzy. In their haste, they did not even have the time to choose their path. They simply ran about through several corridors and the distance between them and the Qin terracotta soldiers gradually increased. The persistent sounds of footsteps too faded away.

They passed through an aisle onto an arch bridge, which connected two palace buildings. On both sides of this arch bridge with a hollow bottom were two tall walls. They ran up to the arch bridge and Miao Yan suddenly crouched down, whispering. "Get down! Don't make any noise!"

The three people from Nangong's side were all veteran Awakened ones. Their reactions were naturally fast and they immediately lied down onto the ground while holding their breath.

Chen Xiaolian too reacted quickly, crouching down while holding onto Soo Soo.

Moments later, the "cha cha" "cha cha" sounds of footsteps resounded from under the bridge!

Upon the pathway below the arch bridge, a large group of Qin terracotta soldiers marched through in a series of lines.

The number of terracotta soldiers here amount up to hundreds!

Additionally, the factor that struck fear into their hearts was that this group of terracotta soldiers numbering in the hundreds were all mounted soldiers!

Riding on horses, the row of teams passed through. All of the mounted soldiers displayed loosely hanging hair and wielded spears in their hands. The edge of the spears were seemingly close to stabbing into the bottom area of the arch bridge!

As for them who were sprawled onto the surface of the bridge, all they needed to do was to extend one hand to make contact with these terracotta soldiers' spears.

They observed the huge groups of mounted soldiers marching through the bottom area of the bridge, the horses' hooves giving off "cha cha" sounds while the lines remained orderly. The chilling air caused goose bumps to spread through their skin!

Everyone restrained from making any sounds. After watching the group of mounted soldiers move far away, Nangong finally breathed a sigh of relief. He then glanced at his companion, the one who was covered in blood and has weak breath coming off him.

"Lun Tai, how are you doing? Can you hold on?" Nangong whispered. Lun Tai shook his head.

"Why aren't you using medicinal agents? Could it be that you people don't even have Healing Beast Blood?" Miao Yan frowned.

Nangong forced out a smile and raised his hand towards Miao Yan. "Thank you for your aid earlier. If not for you throwing those items to disrupt the monsters, I fear that they would have caught up to me and my fellow brothers."

Pausing, Nangong frowned. "This place does not allow the use of Healing Beast Blood. This palace interior is extremely terrifying. Once you get injured, not even the use of Healing Beast Blood will bring about any effect. I am guessing that there is some form of restriction."

"There is such a restriction?" Miao Yan frowned. She abruptly extended her right index finger to make a shallow cut on her left palm. Observing blood flowing out from the wound, Miao Yan retrieved a Healing Beast Blood from the system and swallowed it in one gulp.

She stared at her palm. The wound remained unhealed, and there was no sign of it healing at all.

Miao Yan's face sank!

However, Nangong and his two men and even Chen Xiaolian stared at Miao Yan with a perplexed expression!

This woman...

How extravagant!

Healing Type Beast Blood may not be very expensive, but it still required points to purchase from the Exchange System. For any Players or Awakened ones, points were no different from their lifeblood, something that they would be unwilling to waste in the slightest!

In order to make an experiment, this woman casually used a Healing Type Beast Blood!

Additionally, Nangong was able to clearly see that the one used by this woman was actually a 'High Class Healing Type Beast Blood'!

The effect of using a High Class Healing Beast Blood was extremely good. Even grievous injuries could be recovered after using it! However, its price was far from cheap!

Among the circle of Awakened ones, Nangong could be considered to be a lead figure. However, even he does not possess such deep pockets that he could casually produce and consume a High Class Healing Beast Blood!

This woman however, her face was one of indifference.

Chen Xiaolian did not think too much about that. Instead, he concentrated and pondered before whispering. "I understand. It is probably because this is the core area of the mausoleum. Qin Shi Huang is certainly here within Epang Palace... thus, it would be accurate to consider this place as a 'death land'! Any life force and recovery energies will be suppressed here."

Nangong glanced at Chen Xiaolian. "This little brother here, your

deduction is quite interesting.”

Suddenly, he narrowed his eyes. “You seem familiar. En, that is right! That day, the one playing with model aircrafts is you! That is not right! Could it be that you have been taken over by an arriving Player?”

Right after he uttered those words, Nangong’s face changed madly. His body jumped backwards several steps and his spear was pointed towards Chen Xiaolian.

“What are you doing?”

Miao Yan’s face turned grim and she grabbed onto the spear in Nangong’s hand. Nangong attempted to wrest it back. However, his face instantly turned different as Miao Yan seized the spear away!

“Do not misunderstand,” Seeing Nangong’s two subordinates jumping up with wary expressions, Chen Xiaolian quickly spoke out. “I am an Awakened. I am Guild Leader Qiu Yun’s man. I am with Meteor Rock Guild.”

After saying that, he pulled Soo Soo’s collar to reveal the Meteor Rock Guild’s protective suit.

Nangong’s face slowly eased and he put down his clenched fist. “So, that is what happened... it is a mistake on my part. I never thought you could hide your identity so well.”

Nangong then pointed at Miao Yan and spoke with a cautious tone. “And this is?”

Miao Yan gave a “heng” and gently snapped the spear in her hands, breaking it in half. She threw it down the ground and said coldly. “Just now, I saved your life. Now, you turn hostile just because you want to. I do not like you; there is no need for us to continue our talk.”

Nangong’s face turned into one of embarrassment and he rapidly said. “This humble one is Nangong. I am the Guild Leader of the Nangong Guild.”

As he spoke, his expression was one of embarrassment. However, his

tone revealed a certain pride. It seemed that this Nangong Guild has quite the fame.

Hearing that, Miao Yan did not even bat an eyelid. She said coldly. "Heng, you are famous? I do not care about it."

After saying that, Miao Yan turned to Chen Xiaolian. "These few fellows are nothing worthwhile. I do not feel like going together with them. You?"

Chen Xiaolian smiled. "Naturally, I will be following you."

A pleased look appeared on Miao Yan's face. "At least you have a conscience."

Seeing that Miao Yan and Chen Xiaolian were about to leave, Nangong's face tensed up. He quickly called out. "Wait!"

"What?" Miao Yan narrowed her eyes.

"I mean you no harm," Nangong restrained the fury in his heart and slowly said. "We are all here in this dangerous place. As the saying goes, a solitary tree cannot become a forest. I am aware that senior has a high level of strength. However, going together and looking out for each other is not a bad thing. Earlier on, what happened was only due to a misunderstanding. After all, we are all Awakened ones. Which one of us does not hate those Players to the extreme? It is simply a misunderstanding on my part; there is no need for senior to be so angry."

Pausing, Nangong quickly continued. "We have entered this palace for quite some time. The things that we have encountered and observed along the way are quite considerable. How about we move together? We are willing to share the information we gathered. How about it?"

Those words caused Chen Xiaolian to halt. He turned to look at Miao Yan but she remained silent. Chen Xiaolian then asked. "Guild Leader Nangong, how long has it been since you entered this palace?"

"At least 2 hours," Nangong smiled bitterly.

Two hours?

Chen Xiaolian's heart tensed up.

Two hours. It seemed that this Nangong group had experienced quite a lot within this Epang Palace. They would surely know more regarding the circumstances of this place. Perhaps they might have useful information. That would be better compared to having him and Miao Yan stumble about.

Chen Xiaolian felt tempted and he looked at Miao Yan. Miao Yan then sighed. "Very well. I will follow your decision on this, Xiaolian."

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. "Guild Leader Nangong, let us make it clear beforehand. Moving together is all right with us and we can help protect each other. However, you must not hold back on any information. If you have any ill intent..."

"If you have ill intentions, I will kill all of you. It is not that hard," Miao Yan suddenly spoke out in a cold voice.

Chapter 73: Five De

These words from Miao Yan were uttered with an indifferent voice, as though it was something of no concern for her. However, the words contained an extreme amount of self-confidence!

It was as though killing off those few people before her was something she viewed as something easy that required very little effort.

Naturally, hearing those harsh words caused the faces of the two companions beside Nangong to change. Within their expressions were traces of indignation.

Nangong on the other hand, suddenly laughed out. He slowly said. "Since we will be cooperating, honesty will be of the utmost importance. I, Nangong swear upon my honour, should I conceal anything, I will not be able to leave this instance dungeon alive!"

After saying that, he lowered his voice. "We are all in the same boat. People in the same boat must help one another. This is something that I am well aware of. So, please be at ease."

Seeing his sincere way of speaking, Miao Yan's face no longer seemed so cold.

Chen Xiaolian however, had been feeling tense despite putting on a straight face. In his heart, he thought: According to Qiu Yun, Guild Leader Nangong is quite the renowned person within the Awakened ones circle. Although Miao Yan's words were harsh, he is able to swallow those insults. En, this person is someone who can adapt to the situation, a formidable character!

"As a show of goodwill, allow us to lead the way. We have some rudimentary understanding of the interior of this palace. The three of us will walk in front to lead the way and go find a safe place to further discuss matters. How does that sound?"

Neither Chen Xiaolian nor Miao Yan has any objection towards Nangong's proposal.

Thus, Nangong led his two companions and walked in the van. He also personally went to help prop the injured fellow known as Lun Tai.

The few of them moved past the arch bridge until they reached the other side of the palace. They then walked through a wide corridor for around 2 minutes. Nangong suddenly whispered out. "There is one here!"

At the end of the corridor, there was a palace side door. Nangong stood before the doors, and raised his head to glance at it. A stone tablet with inscription characters written upon it could be seen hanging next to the palace side door. Nangong smiled and opened the door before walking in.

Chen Xiaolian, too noted the stone tablet hanging at the side. He stared at it for a little while and committed the two inscription characters into memory. He lightly smiled before walking into the room.

After everyone had entered, Nangong immediately closed up the doors. Then, he let out a long breath of relief.

"This place is safe," Nangong sighed before laughing out. "Monsters will not step foot into this room. Even if those terracotta soldiers patrol about, they will never set even one foot into this room."

After entering through the door, Chen Xiaolian inspected around.

The area afforded by this side room was not small. It was at least as big as a classroom, shaped in a square.

Within the room were benches, desks, incense burners and other wares.

The one evident difference was that everything within was painted with a deep black colour. In the entire room, there was no other colour except black.

By then, Nangong had already retrieved out 2 candlesticks and lit them up. Then, the side hall became much brighter.

Chen Xiaolian noted that a stone tablet was erected above the front area of this side hall. Two big characters were written on its surface – the characters were similar to the ones written on the stone tablet outside.

"Why will the monsters not attack when we are in this area?" Miao Yan

furrowed her brows. “Could it be that this instance dungeon also provides a safety zone?”

“I do not know either. At any rate, the monsters will not enter this place,” Nangong gave a light smile. “Earlier on, we encountered some monsters. We were chased all over the place. However, as long as we run into this room, the monsters will immediately give up their chase. Even though we were right in front of their eyes, those terracotta soldiers would ignore us, turning around to leave. In short... these rooms with stone tablets on them are safe.”

Miao Yan reflected on it and turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. “Do you recognize the words on the stone tablets?”

Before Chen Xiaolian could speak up, one of Nangong’s companions, the one who were not injured spoke out with a trace of pride. “There is nothing difficult with that, these two characters are seal scripts . They form the words ‘De Water’. ”

Pausing for a moment, the companion swayed his head and said. “As for what De Water means, I too know of it. It is the Buddhist word for the Virtue of Water. Apparently, these rooms must have received the Buddha’s merciful power of protection. Thus, those monsters were unable to enter.”

Hearing those words, Chen Xiaolian could not restrain himself and laughed out.

The man frowned and said with dissatisfaction. “Are my words that funny?”

Chen Xiaolian had originally not wanted to say anything. However, Miao Yan became displeased and coldly said. “If what you say is correct, then others will naturally not laugh. But if what you say is wrong, can others not laugh?”

Nangong turned to Chen Xiaolian. “Brother, do you have any information on it? There is no need to hold back. We are here to discuss things honestly with each other after all.”

Chen Xiaolian hesitated slightly but was urged by Miao Yan. “Xiaolian, no need to be afraid. Just say it out!”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. He then pointed towards the stone tablet on the walls and forced out a smile. “The words are correct, however the order is wrong. If you read it from the left to the right, then it is naturally ‘De Water’. But the correct order of reading for people of ancient times is from the right. Thus, the correct way of reading it is ‘Water De’.”

The earlier fellow’s expression suddenly turned red.

Miao Yan turned curious. “Water De? Xiaolian, what does that mean?”

Nangong too, stared at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian slowly spoke. “The dynasties of ancient times have a teaching regarding the Five De. It conforms to the teachings of the Five Elements of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth. The Spring and Autumn Period uses the teachings of the School of Yin Yang to calculate out the Five De of the ancient dynasties. The time of the Yellow Emperor is of the Earth De, the successive Xia Dynasty is of the Wood De, Shang Dynasty is of the Metal De and Zhou Dynasty is of the Fire De .

It is the principle of the mutual overcoming of the Five Elements .

Thus, Xia replacing the Yellow Emperor represents Wood overcoming Earth. Shang replacing Xia represents Metal overcoming Wood. King Wu of Zhou defeating Shang Dynasty represents Fire overcoming Metal.

Next comes the Qin Dynasty. Although it is said that Qin Shi Huang united the other six states, he actually wrested the world from Zhou. Thus, it can also be said that Qin ended the Zhou Dynasty, which represents Water overcoming Fire.

Therefore, Qin claimed to be the Water De of the Five Elements. Water overcomes Fire, thus, Qin extinguished Zhou. This action gave them a form of legitimacy. It meant that we who reside under the Heavens must conform to the cycle of the Heavenly Dao. Since the Heavens destined it to be so, then we can only abide by them.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian laughed out. “The ‘Annals of Qin Shi Huang’

states: Shi Huang advocates the Teachings of Five De. Since Zhou is of the Fire De, Qin replacing Zhou's De was something that would surely succeed. Thus, begins the Water De."

Chen Xiaolian pointed towards the arrangements of the room. "Qin considers itself to be of the Water De, thus they promote black as things of beauty and value. The colour black represents the Water De. Thus, all valuable items would be created using the colour black. Even the clothes of Qin Shi Huang were black in colour."

"Shouldn't Imperial robes be yellow?" The fellow that Chen Xiaolian had refuted could not resist asking out.

"Using the colour yellow for Imperial robes is a practice started by the later generations. During the Qin Dynasty, the clothes worn by the Emperor is black in colour," Chen Xiaolian quickly replied. However, he then frowned. "I still do not understand. Why is it that by hanging up a Water De sign, the monsters will not enter this room? En, Guild Leader Nangong, how many rooms within Epang Palace has a Water De sign on it?"

Guild Leader Nangong shook his head. "I do not know the exact number. We were unable to go everywhere within this palace. However, the number of such rooms we encountered on the way, inclusive of this one amounts to 3."

Chen Xiaolian frowned and pondered upon it.

Guild Leader Nangong looked at Chen Xiaolian. "Brother, you are so young. How could you know so much? Judging by your looks, you do not appear to be a scholar. Could it be you are a History major college student? That is not right. Your age do not match. With your age, I think you should still be in high school, right?"

Chen Xiaolian has a delicate face. Even though he was already 18-years-old, he appeared slightly younger.

Chen Xiaolian shook his head and let out a bitter smile. "Naturally, I am no scholar. En, I write online novels. Thus, I would read up more on these miscellaneous subjects. I only have a superficial knowledge of

things. If we have to go deeper into it, I can only stare stupidly.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian took the initiative and moved towards the injured fellow’s side. He retrieved a first aid kit from his pocket and went on to bandage the other fellow.

The one known as Lun Tai did not speak up much. His eyes showed gratitude and he said in a low voice. “Thanks.”

Chen Xiaolian helped tear off his clothes and saw a gashing line of wound on his shoulders. The incision was sharp.

“How did this happen?”

“That is a slash from a terracotta soldier,” Lun Tai forced out a smile.

Chen Xiaolian opened the first aid kit and applied some medicine on it. He then used bandages to wrap it up, stopping the bleeding.

The other person looked at Chen Xiaolian with a more courteous expression. “You are quite a good hearted person. En, earlier on, you mentioned that you write online novels? I do like to read them as well. What novels did you write? Perhaps I have read them before.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled and softly said. “I am just a poor guy writer. It is likely that you have never heard of me.”

“En, looking at your young age, you are probably not a Great God. I usually like to read the novels written by a fellow called Fatty Wu. Detestably, that fellow have a tendency to leave his novels without updating them. It really vexes people. Before I entered this instance dungeon, I found that his novel have not been updated for days now.”

Chen Xiaolian chuckled inwardly.

I am standing right before you ah. However, I have been too occupied since returning. It is only natural that I have no time to type anything to update. I had stumbled into this northwest area and entered this instance dungeon.

However, after realizing that this fellow was also his reader, Chen Xiaolian had a better impression of him. He further asked. “Brother, may

I ask how I should address you?”

“That is easy!” The person pointed at Lun Tai. “This is my brother, he is the elder brother while I am the second brother. The two of us originally run an auto repair shop that specializes in tire repairs and others. After becoming Awakened ones, we gave ourselves nicknames. My brother’s name is Lun Tai (wheel tire).”

“And you?” Chen Xiaolian stared with wide opened eyes. He suddenly had this subtle feeling...

As expected...

“My name is Bei Tai (spare tire)!”

Chen Xiaolian held back his desire to laugh out and raised a thumbs up. “Good names!”

‘轮胎’, pinyin: ‘lún tāi’. Lún = Wheel, Tāi = Tire.

‘备胎’, pinyin: ‘bèi tāi’. Bèi = Spare, Tāi = Tire.

1 Seal script is an ancient style of writing Chinese characters throughout the latter half of first millennium BC.

2 ‘德’, pinyin: ‘dé’. The word ‘De’ is a key concept in Chinese philosophy, usually translated as virtue/ inherent character/ inner power/ integrity. However, it has nearly 20 meanings. Thus, I decided to stick with De for its introduction.

3 The Spring and Autumn Period is another name for the Warring States Era.

4 Recorded dynasties in China began with: Yellow Emperor > Xia Dynasty > Shang Dynasty > Zhou Dynasty > Qin Dynasty and so on... Also, in the Five Elements theory, De refers to ‘seasonally productive air/energy (qi)’.

5 Overcoming (others might call it control or restrain):

Earth dams Water

Wood parts Earth (roots, trees can prevent erosion)

Metal chops Wood

Fire melts Metal

Water extinguishes Fire

[Source: Wiki].

Chapter 74: Bronze Men And Big Tree

Nangong produced a piece of paper and scrawled out a map of the area.

“The shape of the palace is roughly similar to the character ‘品’ (grade). Three palace buildings are situated around while the middle area is an empty square. At the centre of the three ‘口’ are an arch bridge and an upward platform.

However, there is a problem. We have been moving around in this area for nearly 2 hours. We have explored every place of the bottom two palace buildings, the two ‘口’ at the bottom. Both of them have gates and stairs leading down to the empty central square.

However, the main palace building up top remains inaccessible. The gates are closed and we were not able to even ascend the stairs. It was as though an energy of some sort was blocking us.

As for the other two great palace buildings, Qin terracotta soldiers will patrol about. These things are like ghosts, appearing all of a sudden at short intervals at unknown locations. We fought with them twice and killed no small number of them. However, when we returned, we found that the broken stone debris left by them on the grounds where we had fought had disappeared. It seems there are no end to these things.”

After saying that, Nangong turned to gaze at Miao Yan.

After Chen Xiaolian finished helping Lun Tai with the bandaging, he too moved over. He inspected the map drawn by Nangong and pondered before saying. “It seems the problem resides in the main palace building... can we only get there through the central open square? Is there no other way? Can we jump over from the rooftop of the side halls?”

Nangong smiled bitterly. “Did you think we hadn’t thought of that method? Lun Tai’s injuries came about due to that. We went to the highest peak of the left palace building and attempted to jump through the walls. As a result, we realized that there is a form of energy sealing the area, leading to us being unable to cross over – Additionally, that place is also a dead-end. A group of Qin terracotta soldiers then blocked

us off and surrounded us. We were nearly wiped out back then.”

“That must be a game restriction,” Chen Xiaolian knitted his brows. “We can only enter the central square through the side palace building, then use the stairs to enter the main palace building. However, a seal is blocking off the stairs. In other words, there must be a certain quest requirement that we have yet to clear.”

“Could it be to kill the guardian?” Miao Yan’s eyes lit up and she looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Didn’t you guess that the guardian is Bai Qi? We will find him and slay this fellow.”

Chen Xiaolian could not help but roll up his eyes.

Kill Bai Qi...

Could Bai Qi be so easy to kill?

Just by listening to his name, you can be certain that he is a big BOSS type of existence.

“What does the central square looks like? Are there any special particulars there?” Chen Xiaolian shifted his attention to the central square.

“... There is,” Nangong said in an earnest tone. “There are a few special particulars. There are 12 metal men.”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes lit up!

12 metal men.

Naturally, they are not made of gold, but bronze. The 12 bronze men.

According to historical records, after Qin Shi Huang unified the world, he feared that revolts would occur. Thus, he issued a command for all weapons within the country to be collected, smelted and forged into 12 bronze men statues. The historical records states: ‘Round all weapons under the Heavens, assemble them in Xianyang, expunge all thoughts with the ring of the bell and 12 bronze men, each as heavy as a thousand stones, placed within the palace’.

“En, what else are there besides the bronze men?”

As Nangong was pondering about it, Bei Tai beside him suddenly mumbled. "There is also a crooked tree."

Crooked tree?

This made Chen Xiaolian stunned:

The palace hall proper is constructed around a crooked tree?

What kind of custom is that?

It is completely inconsistent with the etiquettes and laws of the Imperial Family.

Why would a big tree be planted in the square within the Imperial Family's great palace?

"Do not listen to his ramblings. It is not a crooked tree, but a catalpa tree," Nangong frowned. "After reaching the great hall earlier, I felt bewildered. So, I went closer to check it out. That catalpa tree is not crooked. Only, there seemed to be some hack marks on it. The tree was hacked to the point of becoming crooked."

Even so, that is not an explanation for why this tree is placed at the central square of the Imperial Palace, right?

"There is no point in us talking about it here. Why don't we head there to check it out," Miao Yan stood up.

Chen Xiaolian thought about it and agreed. "That is good too. There is not much time left. We will go to the square to investigate; perhaps we will find some clues."

As they stood up, Chen Xiaolian glanced at Soo Soo and hesitated. He had originally wanted to leave Soo Soo within this safety zone. Pondering about it though, Soo Soo may not be willing. Additionally, he was unable to be at ease about it. Thus, he decided to drop the idea.

They moved out of the Water De room and spent a few moments walking through the corridor. This time, they were fortunate and did not encounter any terracotta soldiers. After passing through two corridors, they reached the side palace building's veranda. There, they saw a

passageway before them. As for the main hall of the side palace building, it was decorated with several wares. There were also several bronze sculptures of defenders.

Chen Xiaolian looked at it and suddenly moved over. He picked up the spear within the arms of a bronze statue and weighed it in his hands. He smiled. "Not bad, we can use it as weapons for self-defence."

Miao Yan's eyes flashed and she too went forward to grab one.

Nangong observed the two of them and threw down the broken stone spear in his hands. He picked up a shield held by one of the bronze statues. As for Lun Tai and Bei Tai, they each found a bronze censer, which they held in their hands.

"This damnable instance dungeon really ticks people off. Our own metals objects are not allowed inside, and yet they place these bronze weapons inside."

Lun Tai complained. Chen Xiaolian nodded inwardly but said nothing.

They continued moving forward and reached the gates of the side palace building. As they were about to push open the gates, they saw two figures coming out from another passage.

Qiu Yun and Alice were walking side by side. Qiu Yun's hair was dishevelled and was looking somewhat miserable. Bloodstains could be seen upon his lips. As for Alice, she was panting and limping as she walked.

As the two of them caught sight of Chen Xiaolian, they were surprised. Then, seeing that Chen Xiaolian was with Nangong, Qiu Yun's face eased a little. He smiled bitterly. "Xiaolian, I did not expect you to still be alive. I assumed that you have died."

Chen Xiaolian sighed. "Guild Leader Qiu Yun, I was lucky. I only fell into a trap room. How did you get here?"

"It is a long story," Qiu Yun thought before shaking his head. "At any rate, it was an arduous journey. It would take a long time to describe and is quite frankly not worth mentioning."

He turned to Nangong and nodded his head. "Guild Leader Nangong."

"Guild Leader Qiu Yun," Nangong's expression seemed somewhat peculiar.

"This time, it appears that we will really have to cooperate," Qiu Yun gave a soft smile. "Does our agreement from yesterday still hold?"

"Haha! Of course it is still valid!" Nangong immediately said. "With a master like Guild Leader Qiu Yun lending a hand, I will have less to worry about."

"You are exaggerating, Guild Leader Nangong. Your strength stands out from the rest and I can only be an accessory."

After the two of them spoke out, Miao Yan who was at the side became impatient. She knitted her brows. "Is there any meaning in you two blowing each other? Going to the square takes precedence. Any idle talks can wait until we walk out of here with our lives!"

Nangong's face turned red; Qiu Yun turned to regard Miao Yan. "Guild Leader Nangong, this is your new guild member? She has a very young face."

"No way! This one here is not a member of my Nangong Guild. She is a master that we encountered along the way. If not for her help earlier, I fear that our bodies would have been refreshed by now."

Qiu Yun's expression turned somewhat peculiar and he turned to gaze at Miao Yan again.

"Let us go. This is not the place to talk," Chen Xiaolian placed the bronze pole arm on his shoulders.

Miao Yan merely stood by Chen Xiaolian's side, not showing any interest in speaking to Qiu Yun or Alice. Her expression was one of haughtiness. It was as though the words 'Strangers Keep Out' were written on her face.

Chen Xiaolian and Qiu Yun walked together for a while. Seeing the bloodstains on Qiu Yun's lips, Chen Xiaolian asked. "You are hurt?"

Qiu Yun nodded his head and softly smiled. He did not say anything but asked instead. "Are you all right?"

"I was lucky," Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips to the side.

...

Their group which now consisted of 8 people pushed open the heavy gates of the side palace building and saw a wide step of stairs spreading out before them. The distance between the great hall's stone platform and the ground was about 7 to 8 metres. Going down the stairs, they reached a huge square shaped open area.

For Chen Xiaolian who had visited the Forbidden City, he felt that this square was even more imposing compared to the central square between the Three Halls of the Forbidden City .

The four-sided square area has a flat surface and black stone tiles were arranged to fit seamlessly.

Most noticeable of all was the area below the stairs from the main palace building where 12 bronze men were placed!

They were divided into two sides, with six on each side.

The mouldings of the bronze men were finely done, but the faces were ambiguous. The only feeling they could feel off it was that it was big!

Raising their heads, they could see that these bronze men have a height of over 10 metres. They were as tall as a three storeyed building. The two lines of bronze men stood in the middle of the square, giving off an imposing atmosphere!

Located just opposite of the great hall...

Was indeed a tree.

This tree was in no way short, with a height of 7 to 8 metres. It has almost the same height as the great hall's stone and rammed earth walls. The crown of the tree was bare and filled with a deep aura of death, not a trace of life was visible.

And yet, it had grown into a very robust state.

Chen Xiaolian walked over, looking over at the big tree several times. He then saw the considerable hack marks on the tree. Extending his hand, he examined them and felt that it was cold to the touch!

Qiu Yun and Miao Yan walked over. Standing beside Chen Xiaolian, Miao Yan whispered. “Hey, Xiaolian. Don’t you know a lot about history? What is the origin of this great hall’s bronze men and tree?”

Chen Xiaolian stroked his nose and gave a bitter smile. “The 12 bronze men are not that hard to explain...”

With a few words, he explained the origins of those 12 bronze men. Then, he pointed at the big tree and forced a smile. “As for this thing, I have no way of explaining it... in this world, which Imperial Palace would plant a big tree outside its great hall? Through the ages, the need to prevent assassins made it so that the Imperial Palace would not allow trees to be planted near the sleeping chambers and main halls for fear that assassins would hide in them.

Additionally, this tree here is all bare. It does not look scenic at all.”

“Qiu Yun!”

Alice suddenly shouted. Qiu Yun turned around to see Alice coming over from the 12 bronze men area. She quickly said. “These bronze men... have many marks on them. All the marks were the results of hacking!”

Hacking?

Chen Xiaolian’s heart tensed up and a train of thought suddenly flashed through his mind!

He subconsciously blurted out. “I understand now!”

1 Gold and bronze are both metals.

2 Hall of Supreme Harmony, Hall of Central Harmony and Hall of Preserving Harmony, the three halls constitute the heart of the Outer Court of the Forbidden City in Beijing, China. [Source: Wiki].

Chapter 75: Beginning of The Five De

Chen Xiaolian stared at the catalpa tree, at the hack marks on its surface. His face turned odd and he gave out a long sigh before using a low tone to speak. "This is a catalpa tree. It is known as the Distinguished Shrine of Fury."

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian's tone became filled with perplexity. "I thought that those were only legends. To think that the tree would actually be here..."

Miao Yan frowned. "What are you muttering? If you know anything then just spit it out."

Chen Xiaolian turned around to look at Miao Yan before looking at Qiu Yun. He realized that Qiu Yun was also staring at him – not just him, even Nangong, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were looking at him.

Chen Xiaolian stroked his face and forced out a laugh. "With all of you looking at me like that, I will have a lot of pressure. All right, no need to keep the suspense. It is just that I have read more when it comes to miscellaneous types of books. Seeing the hack marks on this tree made me remember a myth from the Qin Dynasty."

Exhaling, Chen Xiaolian slowly said. "In ancient times, there is a book of myths regarding the supernatural. It is known as 'In Search of the Supernatural'. One of them tells of a story regarding Duke Wen of Qin .

This Duke Wen of Qin was Qin Shi Huang's ancestor. He was quite frankly, a very important figure.

The Qin Dynasty considered itself to be of the Water De . I have explained this before.

However, this statement regarding the Water De was not brought up during Qin Shi Huang's era. It was brought up since the time of his ancestor, Duke Wen of Qin.

Legends has it that Duke Wen of Qin once went out on a hunt where he hunted down a black dragon. Err, back when I read about this legend, I

guessed that what Duke Wen of Qin actually hunted down was a huge black python.

However, the people of Qin viewed the black dragon as the fortune of the Water De. In other words, black represents water. And so, the black dragon represents the fortune of water.

Thus, after hunting down the black dragon, Duke Wen of Qin placed himself in the position of the ruler of the state. He took it as a sign from the Heavens and the state of Qin had since then considered themselves as being of the Water De.

It could be said that since the time of Duke Wen of Qin all the way until the moment Qin Shi Huang united the world, the state of Qin had always declared themselves to be a state with the Water De.”

“What connection does the hunt of a black dragon have to do with this big tree?”

“There is a connection. It lied with the one who conducted the hunt,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “That person is none other than Duke Wen of Qin.

As I have said earlier, there are some interesting chronicles regarding Duke Wen of Qin in the book ‘In Search of the Supernatural’.

One of them is known as ‘Distinguished Shrine of Fury’.

According to legends, Duke Wen of Qin once went out. He reached a place known as the Distinguished Shrine of Fury. There, he saw a big tree.

For some unknown reason, perhaps something was wrong with his mind, but Duke Wen found the tree to be an eyesore. He sent his soldiers to chop down the tree.

However, something strange happened. No matter how they chopped, they could not chop down the tree. Whenever they hacked down on it, a maddening gale would descend from the skies. At the same time, the big tree would continuously restore the wounds upon itself. In the end, 40 plus soldiers spent the entire day trying to chop down the tree but to no avail.

After that, the soldiers called it a day. Unfortunately, one of the soldiers twisted his ankle and decided to sit upon the big tree to rest. As he was asleep in the middle of the night, the soldier overheard the spirit of the big tree conversing with a ghost. The ghost said to the spirit of the big tree. "What is so great about you? These ordinary people were simply unable to discover the method to chop you down. As long as someone wears red robes, use red ropes to tie up your tree body, sprinkle lime dust on your tree body... then take up the axe to chop you, you will be a goner."

The soldier overheard those words and reported them the very next day. The Qin soldiers followed those procedures to proceed.

Wearing red clothes, they used red ropes to tie up the big tree. Then, they sprinkled the big tree with lime before chopping down upon it... finally, the big tree was chopped down!

After the tree was chopped down, a green ox ran out from within the big tree. It rushed into the river. However, the ox could not endure being in water. Seemingly fearful of the water, the ox ran out. The Qin soldiers that saw it sought to kill it. One of the soldiers slipped, ending up with dishevelled hair. The ox caught sight of that and seemed to be terrified of the dishevelled state of his hair. It was so scared, it ran away and never showed up ever again."

After saying all that, Chen Xiaolian laughed. "That is it. I think... this big tree may be the catalpa tree in the story."

Miao Yan stared. "That is the end? How is that a story? There is nothing exciting or wonderful about it. Is there any peculiarities within the story?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Miao Yan before turning to regard the rest of them. He then gave a soft sigh. "In terms of connection, there is a very big connection! If we are to just regard this story by itself, then there is nothing. However, if we are to look at everything that we have seen in this Epang Palace, in addition to what I said earlier regarding how the people of Qin considered themselves to be of the Water De. Then... this story holds a critical significance!"

Nangong and his 2 companions were bewildered. Qiu Yun's eyes flashed and he asked in a low voice. "How so?"

"It all lies with Duke Wen of Qin."

Chen Xiaolian spoke in a low tone. "The people of Qin considered themselves to be of the Water De. They would unite the world in the name of the Heavens. But, this beginning of the Water De did not come from Qin Shi Huang's body. Instead, it came from the body of his ancestor, Duke Wen of Qin.

It could be said that the beginning for the Water De started from Duke Wen of Qin. He was the starting point.

As for this story about felling the tree, I had originally dismissed it as something minor. But now that I think about it... its contents are infinitely profound."

"Water De, Water De... ," Qiu Yun thought about it carefully. "In this story, water was mentioned. The green ox that appeared from the big tree ran into the river. But, it could not endure being in water and thus it ran out."

"En, but it does not stop there."

Chen Xiaolian gave a light smile. "The so-called water does not have to be physical in form, it can also be symbolic."

As everyone there was trying hard to figure out what those words meant, a small hand gripped onto the corners of Chen Xiaolian's clothes.

"Xiaolian oppa, I know."

Chen Xiaolian lowered his head to see Soo Soo raising her head with pursed lips. "It is hair."

"What?" Miao Yan was stunned and she looked at Soo Soo.

"It is hair," Soo Soo carefully continued. "Xiaolian oppa said before, the people of Qin highly values the colour black because black represents the Water De within the Five Elements.

Hair is black.

That Qin soldier's dishevelled state of hair terrified the green ox.

In other words, loosely hanging black hair that sways about resembles the flow of black coloured water.”

“That makes sense!” Miao Yan's eyes lit up. She could not help but move forward and pinch Soo Soo's baby like cheeks. Miao Yan smiled. “What a smart little girl! Not only are you cute, you are also very smart.”

Soo Soo shrunk backwards, seemingly showing defiance towards Miao Yan's act of pinching her cheeks. Her head shrunk behind Chen Xiaolian's body and she held tightly onto his hand. She pouted her bun like face as she stared at Miao Yan, her big eyes showing discontent.

“Even if this tree is the one that Duke Wen of Qin chopped down... how does that help us?”

Qiu Yun slowly asked. “Now that we know its origin, what do we do?”

“Now we know its origin. Coincidentally, there is an important clue within this story!

At first, I did not know how to break through our current circumstance. Now, I have an idea.

The answer to solve our current plight is within the tree-felling story! How about everyone try to solve it?”

1 Duke Wen of Qin ruled over the state of Qin from 765–716 BC, around 450 years before the state of Qin conquered the other states and established the Qin Dynasty.

2 As mentioned before, the word ‘De’ is a key concept in Chinese philosophy, usually translated as virtue/ inherent character/ inner power/ integrity.

Chapter 76: Players

Chen Xiaolian gave a faint smile.

“Clues? What clues does this story have?”

The one who asked that was Nangong.

As they tried their best to listen to Chen Xiaolian’s story, Nangong, Lun Tai and Bei Tai stared.

“It is a very important clue!” Chen Xiaolian’s expression lit up.

Suddenly, he spread open both his arms, as though he was trying to embrace the entire area within the palace. He gave another faint smile. “Truth be told, there is a correction that I would like to point out for regarding what you may be thinking.

The people of Qin valuing the Water De are true.

However, the Water De remains as one of the components of the Five Elements. It will never exist as an independent entity.

The Five Elements forms a circle, and can only achieve perfection with all Five Elements present.

In other words, all the five elements of Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth needs to be present. As for the people of Qin, they believed that they hold the Water De. Coincidentally, the Heavenly passage of time stated that the time has come for the Water De within the circle of Five Elements to rise. Thus, the people of Qin were able to obtain the world.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian smiled. “The story of Duke Wen of Qin felling the tree... is actually not about felling the tree. It also does not mean that the people of Qin possessed the protection of the Water De... if we are to carefully examine it, this is actually... a story about the circle of Five Elements!

Additionally, the implication of this story is that amongst the circle of Five Elements, the one to acquire the final seat of honour is the Water De!”

Circle of Five Elements?

Within the story, there is only the big tree... en, the big tree represents Wood. Then there is Water... but, where is the rest?

They all looked at one another, not knowing how to solve it.

Chen Xiaolian exhaled and slowly said.

“Cutting the catalpa tree. The tree is thus Wood.

As for the swords and axes used by the Qin soldiers, those can be considered as Metal.

Later on, the Qin soldiers wore red coloured clothes and utilized a red rope. The colour red signifies Fire. Thus, this incident tallies with the element of Fire.

At the end, the river's water and the Qin soldier's black dishevelled hair represents Water.

That means: Wood, Metal, Fire and Water has appeared.”

“What about Earth?” Nangong asked.

Soo Soo who had been hiding beside Chen Xiaolian pouted her bun like face again and frowned. “Since there is Wood, how can there not be Earth? Could the big tree grow on air?”

Chen Xiaolian stroked Soo Soo oval-shaped face and laughed softly. “Soo Soo is correct. In this story, Earth is hidden.

The important part that requires reflection in this story is the order in which Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire and Water appeared. This is a very important clue!”

Seeing how everyone was maintaining their silence, Chen Xiaolian force out a smile. “Please do not think that I am deliberately showing off. There really are particulars of note within it.

As I said before, the Qin Dynasty is of the Water De.

Then, what about the time before the Qin Dynasty came to being?

The dynasties that preceded Qin, beginning with the eldest followed by

its successors are: Yellow Emperor, Xia, Shang, Zhou and then, Qin.

The people of ancient times had made clear records regarding them.

Additionally, the teachings of the circle of Five De had also made records about it:

Yellow Emperor represents Earth De.

Xia represents Wood De.

Shang represents Metal De.

Zhou represents Fire De.

Qin represents Water De.

Observe, the order of dynasties coincides with 'Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire, Water', each representing Yellow Emperor, Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin respectively.

Did you notice? In the story, the order of appearances by the Five Elements also coincides with 'Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire, Water'.

First came the Earth. From the Earth, the catalpa tree was born. Thus, Wood appeared. Next, the Qin soldier took up their swords and axes, signifying the appearance of Metal. It was then followed by them wearing red clothes and using red ropes, signifying the appearance of Fire. In the end, the ox falling into the river and the dishevelled hair of the Qin soldier signified the appearance of Water.

See? The order is completely the same: Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire and Water. There is no discrepancy in this order at all!

In fact, this story is suggesting that: according to the order of preceding dynasties of the Yellow Emperor, Xia, Shang, Zhou, the next in line is Qin!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian forcefully clapped his palms. "Circle of Five Elements has thus appeared!"

"... although I do not understand what you are saying, it sounds very powerful."

The speaker was Bei Tai.

He then stared forward. "But, how does those things you said relate to our present situation?"

"I believe there is a relation... with how to solve our current situation. This open square seemed to have a seal upon it, preventing us from entering the main palace building.

I believe that this restriction is likely something similar to a formation array.

And the requirement for this formation array is the circle of Five Elements!

All Five Elements must be present!"

"The 12 bronze men can be considered as Metal, the catalpa tree as Wood," Qiu Yun quickly said. "Where do we find the other three?"

"We don't really have to go look," Chen Xiaolian pointed towards the palace. "This huge building, in addition to our current location within the mountain meant that Earth could be considered present."

"What about Water?"

"The people of Qin regarded Water as their De. This place is the Imperial Palace of Qin. Additionally, they adorn every place with the colour black. Thus... the Water element is considered present."

After that, Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered. He then said his next sentence with emphasis on each words. "So, in order to break this formation array, the one thing we lack is... Fire!"

"No Fire?"

Miao Yan laughed. She suddenly grabbed Chen Xiaolian's spear. With a spear in both hands, she struck the two together and a series of sparks suddenly burst out!

"Isn't it easy to get fire? Just a few minutes and we will have a fire."

Chen Xiaolian sighed. "It would be nice if it were that simple. Still...

there is no harm in trying. I fear that this Fire element is not that simple.”

Nangong brought over a piece of paper. Miao Yan then used the two bronze spear and struck them together. Soon, sparks burst out. After a few tries the paper caught on fire and a small fire came into being.

The small fire flickered, its light shining upon their faces. Everyone’s expressions were fluctuating.

“What now?” Nangong was the most impatient, and he turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. “We have fire now. How should we proceed with the Five Elements formation array that you said?”

“...” Chen Xiaolian let out a resentful smile. “It seems... the element of Fire is not a literal one. It won’t work simply by making fire. I feel that there is a profound meaning behind it. This formation array is like a puzzle. The literal meaning is not enough to solve it.”

“Fire is not fire, what the Hell!” Nangong grumbled.

At that moment, several voices could suddenly be heard.

On the side of the great hall, the gates from which they came down earlier were pushed open again.

Several people dressed in odd-looking clothes entered.

The one in the lead was a pale faced youngster. Sporting a thick pair of eyebrows, it could only be Han Bi!

Han Bi was walking at the front. Suddenly, the one behind him pushed him down. Han Bi stumbled and fell, rolling down the stairs. Blood flowed down from his head, dripping down onto the ground!

The one who pushed Han Bi down the stairs was a tall and thin man. His upper body was left bare, a necklace made of animal teeth hung around his neck and his long hair was set into countless braids.

Beside him were a female and two males. From a distance, the woman seemed to be wearing a leotard. However, her breasts surged out like billowing waves. Every step she took would cause the two gigantic

mountains to quiver, causing others to helplessly turn their heads.

As for the other two men, they were a pair of twins. They have the same face, one was wielding a wooden staff, while the other held onto a bronze censer.

The braided man stood on top, looking down on every single person within the open square. The corners of his lips lightly curled up as he sneered.

“To think that we are not the first to arrive. The Awakened ones strength in this game is not bad. They were actually able to get before us.”

After those words were spoken, the expression of those standing within the square changed!

Chen Xiaolian had already run over. He propped Han Bi up from the ground and whispered. “Are you all right?”

“I am fine,” Han Bi gritted his teeth. “Be careful, they are Players! Also... they are...”

The braided man descended the stairs. His body flashed and he leapt down with incredible speed. He landed beside Chen Xiaolian and Han Bi, causing Chen Xiaolian to be shocked. Seeing the braided man looking at him, Chen Xiaolian quickly clenched his fists.

“Ants,” A trace of disdain flickered in the braided man’s eyes. He ignored Chen Xiaolian and moved straight ahead.

The braided man’s eyes scanned through everyone there before focusing on Qiu Yun.

“Awakened? I seem to have met you before,” The braided man contemplated for a moment. “Ah, I remember now. You are the one known as Qiu Yun. I fought against you people before in an instance dungeon. Back then, you brought your men to run away to escape being killed by us. However, one of your companions was left behind and fell into my clutches. I broke all four of his limbs and threw him down a snake hole.”

Qiu Yun’s expression turned fearful. “You are...”

“Da Vinci (dá fēn qí)... Guild Leader of the Wind Slasher Guild!”

Hearing that name, Chen Xiaolian’s body quaked!

Wind Slasher Guild!

Da Vinci, raw: ‘达芬奇’, pinyin: ‘dá fēn qí’.

Chapter 77: Forbid You To Touch Him

Da Vinci, Guild Leader of the Wind Slasher Guild!

How could Chen Xiaolian not feel anything after hearing the three words: Wind Slasher Guild?

That was something related to Chen Xiaolian's first instance dungeon experience. It was also the beginning for him within this world!

Feeling wise, Chen Xiaolian held complicated emotions regarding this Wind Slasher Guild. The team members of the guild he met there, the flirtatious and vicious Sara, the mighty and ferocious Damon, the perverted Du Ya and the competent Pattern Man.

Naturally, there was also the Temporary Team Leader of the Wind Slasher Guild, Newton!

Chen Xiaolian's heart had always felt somewhat guilty towards Newton. Back when he started joining the Player Guild's team, Newton had treated him very well.

Newton was also a fair and selfless person, a very good team leader. Chen Xiaolian appreciated his way of dispensing rewards and punishments.

In the end though, Newton was possessed by the Demon. In order to protect themselves, Chen Xiaolian, Han Bi and Soo Soo were forced to kill the possessed Newton...

As for the team members of the Wind Slasher Guild that were exterminated, they all left a deep impression into him!

And now...

In his second instance dungeon, he actually ended up encountering the Players from Wind Slasher Guild!

At any rate, Wind Slasher Guild's Deputy Leader Newton had died by his hands in the last instance dungeon...

...

Da Vinci focused all his attention onto Qiu Yun's body. Da Vinci stood haughtily in the centre of everyone's attention. His face expressing loftiness and his eyes revealed cold indifference. Hearing the word 'Wind Slasher Guild', the expression on Alice, Nangong and his 2 companions changed.

This was especially true for Alice. Despite looking pale, she bit hard on her lips. Her body trembled as she stared at Da Vinci, geysers of flames seemingly bursting out from her eyes.

"Wind Slasher Guild! Da Vinci!" Alice gnashed her teeth. "It is you! You owe me at least 3 of my Black Knights Guild members' lives!"

"Black Knights?" Da Vinci was surprised for an instant before giving off a sneer. "Never heard of it... I have killed so many Awakened ones; if I have to remember the names of all those Dick and Paul, I will be exhausted to death. Heng... a group of virtual aborigines, so what if I killed you?"

Do you hate me? Do you want to kill me for revenge?

That is just great! This way, the game would be more realistic, more interesting!"

Da Vinci tightened his fists and placed them together, releasing knuckle cracking sounds. He twisted his head before extending his hand and waved his finger towards the Awakened ones before him. "Come, a little exercise would be good."

"Die!"

Alice roared out, abruptly going into frenzy!

She leapt to the skies and down towards Da Vinci. One of her palms cut down towards Da Vinci's neck.

"No!" Qiu Yun's face changed and he shouted. However, it was too late!

Alice had already reached Da Vinci's front and her palm came slicing down!

Her skill was in speed!

This move of hers was as fast as lightning!

The hand descended...

Da Vinci simply remained standing with a sneer on his face, not even bothering to move. Watching the sword like palm descending before him, his face revealed only disdain... then...

Shua! Alice's attack struck empty air and cut down through the space behind Da Vinci's head! No one was able to clearly see how Da Vinci dodged the attack! Alice did not stop, but continued with both fists and kicks like a rampaging storm!

Palm strike, fist strike, leg whip, sidekick, axe kick...

A series of combinations were executed in one breath!

Her movements were as fast as lightning. In that short 3 to 4 seconds of time, Alice seemingly had three heads and six limbs. Through her flurry of attacks, Da Vinci became enveloped within the afterimages of her palms and kicks...

However, these series of attacks had no effect whatsoever!

Da Vinci was clearly standing right there. Yet, his body seemed like an illusory shadow. Despite the fact that he seemed immobile, all of Alice's attacks could only strike empty air...

"Faster, faster, faster! Too slow, too slow, too slow!"

Da Vinci stood in the middle of the storm of attacks and his mouth continuously issued out those ridiculing words...

Finally...

Bang!

A miserable scream was uttered and Alice's body flew out.

None of them was able to see Da Vinci's actions. All they could see was an after image seemingly interlapping with his body and Alice crying out in misery as she was thrown out. Alice fell on the ground and rolled back twice. Her left arm had already been bent in a horrifying angle. The bones

above her elbow were protruding outwards and her muscles were exposed!

Blood flowed all over the ground!

Watching that happen, Chen Xiaolian's heart sank!

Alice's skill was known for her speed! Back when she was being surrounded by the terracotta soldiers within the tomb, that ghostlike speed of hers was used to deal with the terracotta soldiers as she shuttled around. That scene had left a deep impression within Chen Xiaolian.

Yet, at this moment... facing Da Vinci, Alice was just like an infant that has no ability to fight back!

One hit KO!

Da Vinci curled the corners of his mouth. "Body Technique Division eh? Heng... a speed type skill, what a pity... it is too weak. In my eyes, you are slower than a snail."

Alice howled loudly. Her right hand slapped down heavily onto the ground and her body was propelled upwards. Her body seemingly broke through the airflow!

Seeing Alice charging at Da Vinci again, Nangong let loose a roar. "What are you waiting for! Charge together!"

Guild Leader Nangong wielded the bronze spear and rushed forward. Lun Tai and Bei Tai too, showed no hesitation. They raised the bronze censer and rushed forward.

The four of them surrounded Da Vinci. The bronze spear slashed through the air and its yellow brilliance shone, bringing with it a vigorous breeze.

Although he was injured, Lun Tai bellowed out and his body suddenly swelled up. His originally skinny figure abruptly expanded. His clothes were almost split in the process! His pair of eyes glowed red and he madly swung the bronze censer.

Da Vinci sneered. "Another Body Technique Division one, a strength

type eh? Pathetic..."

Da Vinci casually dodged the incoming bronze spear from Guild Leader Nangong while seemingly remaining immobile. Nangong's spear struck thin air! Alice then grunted, her waist bent and she fell back, blood spraying out from her mouth.

Lun Tai's hands jerked and he saw that the bronze censer had been gripped tight by Da Vinci's right arm... the transformed Lun Tai bellowed. He clenched his other fist and sent it smashing forward!

"You are looking for death," Da Vinci's face was set in a sneer as he too sent his fist forward...

Bang!

The two fists smashed against one another and the air exploded outwards!

Lun Tai's fist was like a clay pot. A bang resounded and his fist and even his bones burst out! Flesh and muscle flew out and all his fingers were broken! It was as though an iron hammer had pounded down onto dough!

Lun Tai screamed out in pain and his body fell. Bei Tai who was at the back held onto his brother, his pair of eyes turned red and he howled. The bronze censer in his hands were sent flying forward...

Da Vinci scoffed and casually reached out with his hand, catching the bronze censer with ease. Both his hands came together and the bronze censer within his hand was crumpled like a piece of paper and thrown aside!

"Use your skill! Hold him!"

Nangong gnashed his teeth and retreated rapidly! After putting a distance of roughly 7 to 8 metres between them, he saw Bei Tai placing both his palms together. Extending his thumbs and forefingers, he made a triangular pattern. In the middle of the triangular pattern was none other than Da Vinci.

The airflows around Da Vinci's body suddenly transformed into

restraining airflows. The layers of shapeless airflows wrapped up Da Vinci's body!

Da Vinci's eyes flickered slightly and he smiled contemptuously. "Interesting, to think there would be a spatial incarceration."

Both his arms jerked about lightly and he frowned. After that, he spread them open. "A pity..."

Pa pa pa pa pa...

A series of sounds that resembled beans being fried burst out from around his body!

Cracks appeared upon the translucent restraining airflow!

Bei Tai sprayed out blood from his mouth and his body faltered. "Guild Leader, hurry! I cannot hold on!"

Nangong was standing behind Bei Tai, two fingers of his right hand placed onto the spot between his eyebrows...

His pair of eyes suddenly opened wide and brilliant light shone from within them!

Boom!

A golden, yet transparent doppelganger appeared upon the surface of his body! A dense electrical current enveloped it!

Once it appeared, this golden, humanoid doppelganger was like a sword that had been drawn out! The golden doppelganger extended two fingers to act as a blade and stabbed towards Da Vinci!

A boom resounded, as though a thunder had struck down!

The golden doppelganger struck onto Da Vinci's body. The golden light shone brightly, enveloping Da Vinci! Due to the brilliance of the golden light, Da Vinci's figure could no longer be seen...

Nangong's pair of eyes were wide open as he stared. Finally, he let out a deep breath. His expression faded and both his hands were left hanging down. He panted for breath like a leaking bellows.

“Did, did we finish him?” Bei Tai’s eyes were bulging widely.

Suddenly, Nangong’s body shook!

From behind his ears, the indifferent and disdainful voice of Da Vinci came. “Is your display of skills over?”

Nangong’s body stiffened and his throat issued out “ge ge” sounds. A terrifyingly cold feeling instantly paralyzed his entire body...

Ca!

A hand suddenly burst out from his chest!

Da Vinci scoffed and withdrew his hand with lightning like speed. With a huge hole in his chest, Nangong sprayed blood out and fell to his knees. His head tilted and his forehead smashed down onto the ground.

“Guild Leader!”

Bei Tai roared out and scrambled forward.

Nangong exhaled and his body too sprawled down on the ground. His eyes though, were directed to the side, staring at Qiu Yun.

Qiu Yun had been standing still, not moving in the slightest, his face devoid of expression.

“What... are you... waiting for! Bastard...”

Nangong died.

“Qiu Yun!”

Bei Tai raised his head and howled, and then he stared at Qiu Yun with grief and indignation. “What are you standing there for? What are you waiting for?”

Qiu Yun said nothing, his expression as dead as wood and his eyes unfocused.

...

Chen Xiaolian’s body had become paralyzed.

Several Awakened ones had surrounded Da Vinci. However, after being

toyed with for just a few moments, Nangong had died miserably, Lun Tai and Alice had been seriously injured... everything that happened ended too rapidly!

It was so instantaneous that Chen Xiaolian did not even have the opportunity to react. When he had seen them surrounding Da Vinci, he had attempted to rush forward. However, despite the storm like momentum behind their encirclement, it was torn apart instantaneously...

Before Chen Xiaolian could even rush out...

Suddenly.....

Xiu!

A figure suddenly appeared beside Chen Xiaolian.

Da Vinci's subordinate, the woman with astounding breasts had appeared beside him, standing side by side.

"Do not interfere... our Guild Leader is in the midst of enjoying the game. An ant like you should refrain from going up there to disappoint him."

After saying that, she pressed one hand down onto Chen Xiaolian's shoulder. Despite having B Class strength, this slender hand made him no different from a worm. He was held down. No matter how he struggled, his body could not move!

"Our Guild Leader is responsible for having fun while we take out the trash," The big-breasted woman gave a faint smile and squinted her eyes at Chen Xiaolian. She then turned to look at Han Bi. "Guild Leader said that he wants this little one alive for questioning. In that case, you should die first."

After that, the big-breasted woman extended a finger towards Chen Xiaolian's forehead.

Just as the finger was about to reach the area between Chen Xiaolian's brows...

Suddenly, a hand reached out and lightly nipped the big-breasted

woman's wrist.

The big-breasted woman's face suddenly changed!

She caught sight of a pair of smiling eyes. Unbeknownst to her, a woman wearing skin-tight garment had appeared before her.

"I have no interest in meddling with your killing of others. However, this fellow is mine. I forbid you to touch him."

[Author's Note: Naturally, Xiaolian would not continue to be so weak ~ Be rest assured, he will soon shine brilliantly!].

Chapter 78: The Terrifying Qiu Yun

The big-breasted woman's expression showed bewilderment!

She felt as though a pair of iron clamps were pressing down on her wrist. It was such that even part of her body had become paralyzed!

However, the thing that shocked her the most was not that.

This woman, which appeared before her, the time at which she nipped her wrist, her actions, all of those had occurred without the big-breasted woman's realization. She did not see any of it...

Most importantly... when this woman was standing beside her, she had used a cold and indifferent gaze to regard her. That undisguised attitude of indifference exuding from her eyes...

All of those factors made the big-breasted woman feel as though she was nothing but a tiny existence standing right beside a terrifyingly gigantic beast. It was as though all the other party needed to so was to flex its claws to rip her into pieces!

After finishing her sentence, Miao Yan turned away. She stood silently beside Chen Xiaolian, and watched the proceedings happening far away. It appeared that she had no qualms about exposing her back towards the big-breasted woman.

The big-breasted woman's face changed several times within that short moment as she stared at Miao Yan's back, her fists alternating between clenching and loosening.

The humiliation she received earlier gave the big-breasted woman a desire to deliver a vicious blow towards that other woman's back. However, a voice within her heart warned her: Never, ever try that stunt. Otherwise, there will be dire consequences.

As the big-breasted woman was clenching her fist for the third time, the twins standing atop the stairs leapt down. They landed beside the big-breasted woman and one of them lightly placed their hand down onto the big-breasted woman's shoulder. The woman turned to look at her team

member to see him silently shaking his head. In his eyes, there was grimness.

The other one stared at Miao Yan's back in stupor.

Finally, the two brothers retracted their gaze. Looking at each other, they pulled the big-breasted woman and the three of them moved past Miao Yan, Chen Xiaolian, Han Bi and Soo Soo, going towards Da Vinci.

It was as if Miao Yan had brought a tremendously profound pressure down upon them! This terrifying feeling could only be dispelled by moving close to their mighty leader!

...

Nangong had died.

The blood from his body stained the ground beneath him with a crimson colour.

Lun Tai lied on the ground as well, blood flowed out from the exposed flesh and muscle of his pulverized palm.

Alice's arm was twisted and she kept coughing out mouthfuls of blood.

None of them realized something. When the blood flowing down the ground reached the lines between the tiles, it slowly, little by little seeped down...

...

"Qiu Yun! How could you be such a coward? Qiu Yun!"

Bei Tai was crying. He had arrived beside Nangong's corpse and he held on tightly to his Guild Leader, tears flowing down from both eyes.

Alice spat out mouthfuls of blood and coughed out intensely. She too could not hide her look of disappointment as she stared at Qiu Yun with a complicated expression. "Qiu Yun, you, you..."

Da Vinci shook his head and let out a soft laugh. "So, is that the end for warm-up exercise? What a disappointment. From the looks of it, there were 2 Guild Leaders... has the Awakened Guilds become so weak?"

He turned around to look at Qiu Yun. Narrowing his eyes, he asked. "And you? The Awakened known as Qiu Yun, are you really so cowardly that you do not even have the courage to fight me?"

Qiu Yun remained immobile, both his hands drooping down.

Da Vinci suddenly frowned and his eyes turned odd. He suddenly thought of something and used one stride to step before Qiu Yun!

The two of them stood close to one another and Da Vinci used an odd posture to keep his eyes level with Qiu Yun's!

Their eyes met and yet, Qiu Yun's gaze remained empty...

Da Vinci raised an eyebrow.

He suddenly extended a hand. Slowly and gently, he poked Qiu Yun's forehead.

Next, a shocking scene occurred!

Qiu Yun... a change suddenly happened to his body. His body suddenly disappeared... leaving only his clothes, floating there while maintaining a humanoid shape.

As though a certain force had faded away, the clothes dropped down the ground, becoming a crumpled heap.

Da Vinci took a deep breath and bent down to examine them. He extended his hand and picked something up from the heap of clothes.

Surprisingly, it was...

It was a piece of paper the length of a finger. It was cut into the shape of a tiny human.

A small paper person?

Da Vinci's face sank and he turned silent for a moment before bursting out with laughter.

"Hahahahahahaha! To think that I was actually mistaken! Ha ha ha ha! Good! Good! Interesting!

This one is actually a doppelganger! Excellent! I like this type of

cunning prey!”

Da Vinci turned to regard the other Awakened ones and laughed out madly.

“You bunch of fools! It turns out this fellow was not even walking together with you! The one walking with you is actually just a doppelganger!

Hahaha! Looking at your expressions of surprise, it is obvious he had concealed it even from you all.

I do not know what is it that he is trying to do. He used this method to conceal his disappearance from all of you even though you are his companions. Meanwhile, his real self must be up to something at some other place. Hahaha!”

Doppelganger?

Everyone including Chen Xiaolian and Alice were shocked!

Qiu Yun... was just a doppelganger?

Chen Xiaolian clearly recalled that he and Qiu Yun had entered the instance dungeon together! He clearly recalled the time when they had killed off the fearsome Zombie Wyrms and the time when they had to fight off the terracotta soldiers. Back then, Qiu Yun had to display his powerful strength.

But then, why did he now become a paper man?

Doppelganger?

Naturally, Alice was also feeling doubtful. The Black Knights Guild Leader stared at the piece of paper in Da Vinci’s hand with eyes that were filled with shock!

As Da Vinci burst out in laughter, Chen Xiaolian knitted his brows.

A thought suddenly flashed through his mind:

That is not right!

...

When they were battling the Zombie Wurm, Chen Xiaolian had accidentally hurt the Zombie Wurm. However, Qiu Yun was the one who singlehandedly finished off the Zombie Wurm that had killed off several Awakened ones in the end!

When they were battling the terracotta soldiers, Alice and her guild members were engaged in a bitter fight against the terracotta soldiers. As for Qiu Yun, he had personally finished off the Qin general standing above the platform!

That level of strength cannot possibly be that of a doppelganger!

In other words... the one who accompanied him into this instance dungeon was Qiu Yun's real body!

The one who fought alongside him, was Qiu Yun's real body!

However... at a certain point in time, Qiu Yun had quietly left, leaving his doppelganger here.

But... why did he have to hide it from his own team mates?

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian suddenly recalled Soo Soo's warning to him!

That man... terrifying?

...

... ..

"So... it is the Five Elements formation array eh? Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth..."

At the front hall of Epang Palace, within the great hall not far away from the 'magnet' gates, the huge four-sided ding...

Qiu Yun stood there, focusing his attention onto the ding that was higher than himself.

His gaunt and pale face revealed traces of a pleasant smile.

"I thought I merely acquired a decent chess piece. Unexpectedly, he actually helped me unravel this mystery. Five Elements formation array,

Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth... hmph, interesting.”

Suddenly, he raised his eyebrows.

“Eh? The doppelganger technique was seen through?”

Qiu Yun extended out his right hand. Within his palm, a tiny humanoid paper suddenly caught on fire, turning into ashes in but moments.

“No matter.”

Qiu Yun smiled coldly. “It does not matter if it is Alice, Nangong or even that interesting little guild member of mine. You have displayed your value to the utmost. And now... I will use you all to help me complete my final step.

Da Vinci? What an unexpected surprise. However, with your participation, my chances of winning becomes higher!”

Qiu Yun stood before the gigantic ding and his body slowly floated high above the gigantic ding.

He produced something out from his sleeves. It was long and narrow, roughly the size of a palm, and thick.

Judging by its looks, it was a form of copper or jade. It appeared ancient, displaying years’ worth of sediment and was fragmented.

Upon the surface of this item was carved the outline of a simple yet deep pattern.

This pattern was shockingly...

A tiger pattern!

The item turned out to be an ancient symbol of military authority... the Tiger Tally !

Even though it was partially damaged, Qiu Yun lifted this ancient item up high.

He extended the index finger of his left hand and made a light cut upon his right palm, letting his blood flow onto the surface of the Tiger Tally...

Then, the blood that had flowed across the surface of the Tiger Tally

dropped down onto the gigantic ding...

“Red, red represents fire!

Chen Xiaolian, thank you for your reminder. I am really reluctant to let someone as interesting as you die.”

Qiu Yun let out a faint smile. “A pity, in the last instance dungeon, I had to pay a great price in order to acquire this half broken Tiger Tally legacy from the King of the State of Qin. All of that is for this one opportunity!

By acquiring his soul, my ‘General’s Celestial Body Plan’ will finally attain the most perfect, most powerful, most dominant form of Celestial Body! !”

His blood dropped down onto the giant ding and seeped into it in just moments...

Qiu Yun’s eyes turned maniacal. He inhaled deeply and shouted in a low voice.

“Come out! God of Slaughter, Bai Qi! By the order of this Qin Tiger Tally, I awaken your General’s Celestial Body! All those people within the palace hall are the lifeblood offerings for you! Savour them, and then... condense out your God of Slaughter’s soul!”

1 Tiger Tallies were often used as proof of authorization by a King or Emperor when commanding or dispatching an army. Other shapes have been used for the tally, but tiger remains the most widespread one.

2 This sentence is quite vague and would likely be subjected to change if the author ever elaborates on it in the future. Raw: ‘得到他的魂魄, 我的‘将星图’, 就终于得到了最强大最圆满的一个主星’.

Chapter 79: Final Entrant

Qiu Yun's blood flowed down the Tiger Tally and fell down onto the giant ding.

From within the ding, black wisps of qi were emitted out. They condensed atop the surface of the ding, whirling slowly.

Upon Qiu Yun's face was excitement and emotions.

...

At seemingly the same time.

The open square was suddenly transformed into something akin to a gigantic sauna.

Qi vapour began to rise continuously from the gap between the tiles.

These dark red gas appeared with such abruptness that everyone were shocked.

Miao Yan subconsciously turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian's face was grim as he solemnly stared at red mist coming out from the thin gap between the tiles.

"Xiaolian?" Miao Yan shouted.

Chen Xiaolian's expression remained grim and he let out a bitter smile. "Do not ask me. I have no idea what is going on either. I have been here with you all this time. This..."

He took a deep breath. "It appears that... the Five Elements array I mentioned has been activated?"

Miao Yan was startled! Clearly though, this woman's eyes were shining with excitement and curiosity.

She, does she even understand the concept of fear?

...

"Come! Come! Once again! More sweet blood to act as nourishment! Only then can Bai Qi be truly awakened!" Qiu Yun's body had already

dropped down to the ground and he stood beside the giant ding. His face was no longer as relaxed as it was earlier. He panted, and his face revealed withered paleness.

...

Two loud noises resounded simultaneously from both the left and right side of the open square!

The 2 gates of the 2 side palaces of Epang Palace that were facing the open square were pushed open at the same time!

A dense and orderly row of Qin terracotta soldiers charged in!

Shield bearing soldiers in the front, pole arm and sword bearing soldiers in the middle. As for the crossbow bearing soldiers, they immediately spread out on both sides like wings the moment they walked out from the side palace buildings. Those terracotta soldiers went down on one knee and raised their crossbows, aiming their crossbow arrows at everyone who were standing at the square.

More and more terracotta soldiers rushed in from the 2 side palace buildings. The sight was akin to dark clouds racing speedily down from both stairs, rushing down towards the open square. They surrounded the square in a dense orderly formation. If one were to take a view of the top of the open square, one would mistake them for a group of black ants!

“Prepare for a big fight!”

Da Vinci shouted loudly. He flexed both arms and roared. “Get rid of these weak soldiers. Do not waste too much energy. It seems the main boss is about to appear!”

“Guild Leader!” The big-breasted woman quickly asked. “What method do we use?”

“Follow the old method,” Da Vinci immediately replied. “Follow me, we will rush in to the main palace building! Leave these Awakened ones behind to become our cannon fodder!”

Da Vinci had already moved towards the main palace building’s stairs.

The big-breasted woman and the twins followed closely. The 4 of them stood beneath the stairs and immediately began with a peculiar action.

The twin brothers glanced at one another and nodded at the same time.

The one on the left quickly produced three small flags and placed several flags down the surrounding area occupied by the Wind Slasher Guild members. The inserted flags formed a triangular shape.

The three little flags were of the black, white and yellow colour respectively. The moment the flags were inserted onto the ground, the flag that was originally swaying about suddenly quivered. With a “shua”, they rose straight up as they fully unfurled.

“What a dense killing intent!” The younger twin looked at the flag beneath their feet.

The elder twin had already sat down cross-legged on the ground.

At that moment, Da Vinci was standing guard for the triangle’s main corner. The big-breasted woman and the younger twin were respectively protecting the other two corners. The three of them placed themselves around the elder twin, protecting him.

“Make sure to control the rhythm,” As Da Vinci observed the incoming Qin soldiers, it appeared that he was still able to smile. “Do not be hasty in launching skills. We still need to fight the guardian.”

...

“Move quickly! Everyone assemble!”

As the Qin soldiers were rushing down from the 2 side palace buildings, Chen Xiaolian ran towards Bei Tai.

He held onto Soo Soo in his hands while Miao Yan followed.

Chen Xiaolian grabbed onto Bei Tai’s neck and shook with force. “Stop crying! If you do not want to die, then get up and fight!”

Seeing Bei Tai’s expression of distress, Chen Xiaolian shouted as he pointed towards the badly injured Lun Tai who was lying on the ground. “Your Guild Leader is already dead! Do you want your brother to die here?”

Do you want the both of you to die here?"

Bei Tai shuddered!

Chen Xiaolian pointed towards the catalpa tree and shouted. "We will go there! Place our backs against the tree and fight back!"

Bei Tai said nothing. He grabbed Lun Tai and placed him on his shoulders. Then, he strode towards the catalpa tree. Chen Xiaolian glanced around and grabbed the still breathing Alice. He shouldered her and quickly ran.

They ran to the side of the catalpa tree. Chen Xiaolian observed the soldiers descending down the stairs. Although their speed was not fast, the neat rows of Qin terracotta soldiers and the dense formation used by them caused his scalp to tingle.

"We cannot hold back anything! We must first survive this hurdle!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian looked at the people beside him... Alice and Lun Tai were both injured.

Han Bi seemed somewhat better. However, he too could only barely stand and walk.

The only fighting force we could count on is probably the mysterious Miao Yan, Bei Tai and me.

And Soo Soo... well, during the most critical moment, she could launch the blazing Phoenix skill!

"Han Bi!" Chen Xiaolian shouted. "Can you still fight?"

Han Bi's thick, brush like eyebrows knitted together. Then, he exhaled and whispered. "Even if I can't, I still have to!"

Pausing, he continued in a low voice. "My skill is temporarily unusable... I had used it when fighting against the Wind Slasher Guild members, for now..."

"En, follow behind me, don't stray too far," Chen Xiaolian said without hesitation.

Miao Yan who was waving her bronze spear had seemingly become more piqued. She then glanced at Chen Xiaolian and curled the corners of her lips. “What nonsense! You still want to be a hero? When the fight starts, all of you can just hide behind me! Heng!”

The square was soon nearly filled with the descending Qin terracotta soldiers. The rows of soldiers took up more and more of the area in the centre of the square. Oddly, though, the formation of soldiers from both sides stopped just as they were tens of steps away from the Awakened ones and Players.

The black military formation of soldiers was displayed before them. These stone terracotta soldiers were obviously unable to speak. However, that silence emanating off the battle formation, appeared no different from a sky-piercing thirst for blood.

At that very moment...

Crunching sounds could be heard coming from the north of the square...

The sealed main gates slowly opened!

A huge foot stepped out. Black coloured greaves, thighs as thick as a tree shrouded by black qi!

Then, the entire figure appeared!

A burly constitution, 30 feet tall (9.14 m), armour tied around his waist, a black scarf wrapped over his head, the head of a Qin general.

Rock like shoulders with godlike curves!

As this lesser giant like Qin general was walking out of the main palace building...

Shua!

With a uniformed action, every row of terracotta soldiers turned their bodies, raised their heads up 45 degrees and turned towards the Qin military general.

Sky-piercing black qi enveloped his body! It appeared as though his

entire body was standing within the shadows itself... resembling a divine martial black knight from the legends!

This was especially true if one were to examine the face of the general that was akin to a black void!

Miao Yan stared at the black commander standing before the gates. Her face revealed eagerness. "Chen Xiaolian! Could this be Bai Qi? Is it?"

"I, I do not know," Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "Maybe..."

Then...

The situation turned worst!

This military general that was shrouded with black qi walked down from the main palace building. Then, he moved, turning to the left to give way...

From the main palace building behind him, another huge military general in black armour stepped out!

Then... the third appeared!

... and the fourth!

The four military general with a height of around 10 metres stood before the gates of the great hall, black qi swirling around their body...

By then, Chen Xiaolian was certain... these were not Bai Qi!

Miao Yan squinted her eyes and stared at the row of 4 giant military generals. "I can feel a strong thirst for blood! The killing intent on these fellows body is very strong! I have never encountered this level of blood thirst before! En, a pure power of darkness! Just like that of the Undead Knights, but stronger! I like it, hahahaha!"

Chen Xiaolian could not help but throw a glance at this woman: To think she could say something like that at a time like this. Is she crazy? Or, is her level of strength so powerful that she could be so confident?

...

"Haha, haha, hahaha!"

Qiu Yun weakly laughed and he squinted his eyes. “Kill! Kill! Let more blood flow! Hahaha ha ha ha... let more blood flow down to become nourishment! Just a little more, just a little bit more!

En, who should I choose to sacrifice first?”

His empty eyes suddenly flashed with a strange radiance. “I choose you!”

At that moment, Qiu Yun was standing beside the gigantic ding, holding onto the Tiger Tally in his hands. Wisps of flaming black qi branched out from the side of the gigantic ding, and swirled up both of Qiu Yun’s thighs!

“Tiger Tally... Tiger Tally... is this the feeling of holding absolute control over military power? Haha!”

Both of Qiu Yun’s eyes flashed and he spoke out in a deep but low voice. “I will put you on the chopping board first... Da Vinci!”

...

Ptong!

From outside Epang Palace, an average built person struggled to push open the heavy ‘magnet’ gates.

After labouring to open a small gap, he took a step inside.

With sweat flowing down his head, Xia Xiaolei ran inside and quickly closed the magnet gates! After that, he leaned onto the surface of the magnet gates, panting for breath.

How unlucky! Why am I so unlucky!

The system is being too unfair! It gave me who lives in the mountains the message to enter this instance dungeon within 48 hours! Rushing to the county town alone takes half a day argh!

I was barely able to enter this instance dungeon in the final 3 minutes before the 48 hours limit was reached! That was considered a huge luck for me!

But... why is it that this time around I cannot find any place to hide?

I was chased by stone monsters, pursued by terracotta soldiers and fell into a damnable hole. The fall caused me to bruise and bleed all over. Then I mysteriously rolled down towards this big palace's gates...

There doesn't seem to be anyone here? Hopefully, I can hide here for a while then!

En, it would be best if I can hide here until the instance dungeon concludes!

As Xia Xiaolei was panting for breath while leaning on the magnet gates, he suddenly let out an "eh" sound!

He caught sight of Qiu Yun who was standing beside the gigantic ding!

"There is someone? Is he an Awakened or a Player? Damn!"

Xia Xiaolei quickly threw himself down the ground and he rapidly crawled to the side as his buttocks stuck up in the air.

He did not see me, right? He did not see me, right? Right? He did not see me! He did not see me!

Xia Xiaolei's body turned soft.

Chapter 80: Sea of Pets

Four black military general, which resembled spirit Gods stood in a row before the main palace building. Black monstrous qi rose up to the skies from the top of the stairs.

A dense number of Qin soldiers stood in formation within the square while the black air enveloped the square area and gradually transformed into something resembling dark ink like clouds over the skies.

It even obscured the starry light emanating from the precious stones embedded into the ceiling of the caverns.

The illumination within the square rapidly grew dim and the surroundings gradually became dark.

Chen Xiaolian raised his head and observed the dark ink like clouds above. It was roiling about, as though it was about to give birth to something...

At long last, the 4 black military generals standing before the main palace building made their move.

The leftmost black military general suddenly took a step forward. With but a few steps, that tall body reached the bottom of the lengthy stairs.

He stood before the Wind Slasher Guild. The 12 bronze men stood between him and the Wind Slasher Guild.

The black military general suddenly drew out the sword from his waist. Pointing the blade of his sword at the Wind Slasher Guild, he made a heavy slash! With a “shua” and a black flaming qi, a deep ravine suddenly appeared upon the surface of the ground.

At the same time, several rows of Qin soldiers vigorously made a turn. It was as though they have just received an order!

The formation by the row of soldiers was precise and sharp, like that of a blade. The front row of soldiers raised their shields and the pole arms stuck out from behind them, pointing to the front. The archers pulled their bowstrings and the soldiers raised their swords...

“They are coming!” Da Vinci narrowed his eyes.

Just after he spoke out, a “weng” sound could be heard!

The archers from the rear area of leftmost side had already let loose a volley of arrows! A concentrated number of arrows pierced through the skies, creating air-piercing sounds as the arrows covered the area occupied by the Wind Slasher Guild!

Da Vinci remained immobile!

The older twin sat cross-legged on the ground in the middle of the triangle, both his eyes closed.

A translucent gold radiance emerged from the surface of the flags, resembling a triangle shaped, translucent glass cover that encompassed the area above the Wind Slasher Guild.

The sounds of impact rang out continuously and the concentrated rain of arrows that fell upon its surface were all repelled away, scattering all over the place.

The arrows scattered about and the majority of the repelled arrows fell onto the surrounding area. The older twin sitting in the middle had a grim expression as both his eyes remained closed. His expression was no longer as tranquil as it was earlier.

The black military general raised his long sword again. This time, the front row of soldiers from the left began marching forward! From behind the body of shields, pole arms stuck outwards.

A square formation of soldiers moved out from the main Qin armies, marching forward.

The three little flags on the grounds where the Wind Slasher Guild was at burst out with radiance once again.

The golden triangular barrier suddenly broke apart, transforming into countless golden rays of light, shining out without restraint! It was like an uncountable rain of golden arrows, slamming directly into the square formation of Qin soldiers that was moving close towards them.

Under the barrage of intense golden rays of light, the front rows of Qin soldiers were lifted off their feet. A considerable number of terracotta soldiers had their bodies smashed by the golden rays, pulverized into stone fragments and fell down the ground. Some had raised their shields, only to have the shield easily pierced through by the golden rays.

Under the onslaught of the golden light, a small percentage of the square formation of Qin terracotta soldiers were felled. Heaps of black stone fragments lied upon the ground. There were also partially dismembered terracotta soldiers crawling on the ground. These soldiers showed no expression as they crawled on the ground, doing their best to move towards the Wind Slasher Guild.

From the rear end of the square formation, sword-wielding soldiers had quickly spread out like a pair of wings. Then, they moved out of formation and strode towards the Wind Slasher Guild.

Once again, Da Vinci remained immobile.

He gave a glance at the big-breasted woman.

The big-breasted female understood instantly and let out a faint smile. With a wave of her hand, two pets appeared beside her.

One of them stood taller than the big-breasted woman. Surprisingly, that was a fully black coloured...

Black Widow Spider!

This Black Widow Spider possessed an even bigger body shape than the one Chen Xiaolian had encountered before in the 72 Demons Instance Dungeon. Its 8 sickle like claws scraped the ground in a restless manner as it moved about.

The other pet was an armoured warrior with ice enveloping his entire body. His entire body was covered by thick armour. The style of the armour gave off a heavy European feeling. His face was hidden beneath the visor and could not be seen.

The big-breasted woman calmly stood behind the flag and gently waved her two fingers. The Black Widow Spider and the Armoured Warrior

quickly rushed forward!

The Armoured Warrior wielded a great sword and charged into the ranks of the sword bearing Qin soldiers. Everywhere he slashed would be visited by a frost qi. Everywhere he went, the Qin terracotta soldiers would end up having their bodies hacked apart! That was especially true for those Qin soldiers who approached it. The Qin soldiers were frozen and could only stand rigidly on the spot. Next, the Frost Armoured Warrior's sword would sweep towards them, cleaving them to smithereens!

In the few moments since the Frost Warrior appeared, he had already cut down 7 to 8 of those Qin terracotta soldiers. On the ground beneath him, a field of frost had spread out!

As for the Black Widow Spider, it was even more powerful!

Despite having a huge body, the Black Widow Spider's speed was even faster. A black figure rushed out as the Black Widow charged into the midst of the group of Qin soldiers. In but a moment's time, 5 to 6 terracotta soldiers were thrown out. Next, the 8 sickle like claws danced about slashing in all directions! The Qin terracotta soldiers surrounded the Black Widow and stabbed forward. However, the weapons they wielded struck in vain, creating only the pointless sounds of "ding ding dang dang". The Black Widow's sickle like claws on the other hand were incomparably sharp. Every time it slashed down, a Qin soldier would be hacked away!

The warrior and spider became an obstacle on the left side of the Wind Slasher Guild! The Qin soldiers square formation charged in frenzy, but were unable to break through the defences of these 2 pets!

That was especially true for the Black Widow. As a spider, it had seemingly no blind spot at all! Its 8 sickle like claws sealed off every possible direction of approach!

The rearmost archers shot out without restraint and their arrows pierced through the air. They then struck the Black Widow's body, only to have most of them be repelled off.

The Black Widow did not even show any fear towards these attacks. However, it did rouse its ferocious nature!

The Black Widow suddenly turned around, and then...

A mass of white objects were sprayed out and it fell onto the archers standing far away within the formation...

The white threads formed a dense spider web with strong adhesive powers. It fell onto some of the archers, sticking to them. Then, the Black Widow abruptly turned around...

The Black Widow rotated its body like a gyroscope and the Qin archers that had the spider webs pasted onto them were lifted up! They became a flail, sweeping the area and smashing apart the Qin soldiers in the area!

The Frost Warrior too, had already unleashed his skill. Upon the surface of his great sword, a dazzling white light could be seen. Everywhere he went would be littered with pieces of frozen Qin soldiers! They had become ice figures! The Black Widow that was crushing down on the Qin soldiers with its overwhelming might caught sight of the frozen Qin soldiers and charged towards them. Its charge pulverized them into smithereens...

Chen Xiaolian watched the battle from the distance, his eyes bulging wide.

This was the first time he witnessed someone using 2 pets to do battle!

The strength displayed by the big-breasted woman had far surpassed Chen Xiaolian's expectations!

The big-breasted woman stood behind the flag with an expression of contempt. She sneered. "Guild Leader, these monsters are too weak. Also... they give too little points. There is only one point for killing 3 or 4 of them."

Right after she uttered those words, the big-breasted woman's face suddenly underwent change!

A Qin soldier in the garb of a general charged forward!

The Frost Warrior sent out 2 consecutive frost qi slash, but they were deflected by the Qin general!

Clearly, the strength of this Qin general far exceeded that of the ordinary Qin terracotta soldiers! After deflecting the 2 frost attacks, the Qin general rushed before the Frost Warrior! The long sword in his hand hacked down onto the Frost Warrior's head!

Bang!

The Frost Warrior immediately took several steps back. An indentation appeared at the centre of the helmet on his head!

The Qin general gripped onto the hilt of this sword and took 2 steps forward. He then viciously delivered a stab onto the Frost Warrior's chest!

The tough armour worn by the Frost Warrior was not pierced through. However, the tremendous momentum behind the strike forced him back again! The Qin general unflinchingly bent his knees and leapt up. He soared through the air and slashed down!

This time, the sword hacked down onto the junction point of the Frost Warrior's left shoulder armour. With a breaking sound, his whole arm fell off!

From the broken area, a white coloured cold qi flowed out

The Frost Warrior was beaten senseless and he futilely waved the great sword in his hand. The Qin general moved rapidly, moving behind the Frost Warrior and hacked down onto the Frost Warrior's head once again.

The helmet was indented inwards once more!

"Not good!"

The big-breasted woman cried out involuntarily and she immediately summoned back the Frost Warrior. The Frost Warrior transformed into a white beam of light and disappeared.

The Qin general turned around and his stone face gazed at the big-breasted woman. The big-breasted woman turned furious. "You damaged one of my pets! You're looking for death!"

The Black Widow rushed over and its long sickle like claws descended, piercing through the Qin general before throwing it away.

When the Qin general fell to the ground, his body broke into pieces.

However, another 7 to 8 Qin soldiers wearing general garbs quickly appeared from the back of the Qin soldiers. They rushed forward!

These terracotta soldiers wearing general garbs were clearly a notch stronger compared to the ordinary terracotta soldiers!

Despite its ferocity, the encirclement by the terracotta generals caused the Black Widow to retreat. That was especially so when the terracotta generals used their swords to hack down onto the Black Widow. The tough shell of the Black Widow's body was unable to endure the attacks and were broken. After being struck several times, it let out a sharp cry and shot out its spider webs, wrapping one of the generals into a white ball of web. Its sickle like claw arced out and cut the ball into two.

However, another general leapt up onto the Black Widow's back...

The Black Widow panicked and struggled to turn its body. However, the general stubbornly held onto the Black Widow's body. The general was hurled around, but he remained infallible. Then, even more Qin generals followed suit.

Three more generals jumped up and the Black Widow brandished its sickle like claws to stop them. It managed to cut off the waist area of 2 generals. However, one of them managed to leap onto the Black Widow.

The Qin general stabbed down with his sword onto the back of the Black Widow at random. The Black Widow was able to resist most of the attacks. However, one of them finally stabbed down onto the Black Widow's eyes...

The Black Widow's body violently thrashed about, screaming in a sharp voice. Despite crushing several Qin terracotta soldiers, its body was tilting...

The big-breasted woman's face turned increasingly distorted. She heavily gritted her teeth and summoned back the Black Widow. The Black

Widow became a beam of light and disappeared into the air.

One of the Qin general who fell to the ground broke his leg. Despite that, he used his sword to prop himself up and vigorously rushed towards the big-breasted woman.

The big-breasted woman was in a rage!

She waved her hand and summoned out another 2 pets!

A War Wolf and a War Bear!

Both pets transformed into humanoid forms. Standing upon their rear legs, they let loose a roar and pounced onto the Qin soldiers!

Chen Xiaolian who was observing from afar was thoroughly shocked!

This woman... just how many pets does she have.

The Wolf Warrior and Bear Warrior were obviously warriors of the strength type of build specializing in warfare. They rushed forward and engaged in a melee battle with the Qin generals. Swords flew up and down and 2 Qin generals were crushed to pieces. Another one was bitten by the Bear Warrior before being thrown out!

The Bear Warrior had 2 swords stabbing into his body. One onto his back and another onto his thigh.

The Wolf Warrior was more agile compared to the Bear Warrior. He stretched out his claws and pounced up and down, killing off two Qin generals before being surrounded by a group of Qin soldiers. Tens of pole arms stabbed into him and he fell dead onto the ground. His body then turned into a beam of light and disappeared.

The big-breasted woman's face was livid. She sneered and waved her hands once more. Two Wolf Warriors appeared beside her!

Chen Xiaolian no longer had the strength to be surprised.

This bitch... is she playing a sea of pets?

Chapter 81: Xia Xiao Lei

“Do not be vindictive.”

Da Vinci softly said. “Do not waste your strength on these weak mobs. Just block them off. The way I see it... those fellows are about to come down!”

Da Vinci pointed out with his finger at the black military general who had already stepped forward!

When compared to the black general’s 3 zhang (~ 9 m) body, the members of the Wind Slasher Guild were simply puny. Black qi swirled around the surface of his long sword as he stepped towards the triangle formation of the Wind Slasher Guild!

This time, the younger twin rushed forward!

His figure disappeared!

In the next instant, he appeared before the black military general. His body soared through the air until he reached the black general’s neck area and he extended his fingers out while in mid-air.

From his fingertips, a silvery light burst out and landed upon the surface of the black general’s neck. The black general’s body swayed for an instant before he immediately turned around. A black fiery qi spouted out from both his eyes!

The younger twin disappeared. In the next moment, he reappeared again behind the black general, extending the same finger like a sword and shooting out another silvery beam of light.

This time, the flaming black qi blocked off the silvery light. The younger twin’s figure was seemingly capable of teleporting and he disappeared before reappearing again. This time too, he had reappeared in the black general’s blind spot.

Unfortunately, despite the masterful execution of his attacks, the black general’s body was protected by the black qi. The silvery light shot out by the younger twin could not break through the black general’s defence at

all.

After receiving a number of attacks, the black general let out a roar. He ignored the younger twin and began sprinting towards the triangular formation!

The younger twin gritted his teeth and determination flashed through his eyes. He abruptly took a deep breath!

His figure violently expanded outwards!

In just one breath's time, his skinny figure had suddenly expanded to double that of his original size.

The younger twin instantly transformed into a 3 metre lesser giant!

Despite being smaller than the black general, he was now an imposing figure himself.

The younger twin roared loudly and a lightning like radiance appeared from his palm – it was as though an axe of light had materialized from his bare hand. As he roared, he cleaved down onto the black general's head!

The black general turned around and used his long sword to parry the blow. A loud sound resounded and the air blasted outwards from the resulting impact.

The surrounding Qin terracotta soldiers lost their footings and were all sucked up by the blowing air.

The younger twin roared continuously. Brandishing the golden light axe, he engaged in a fight with the black general!

Although his size was smaller than the black general, his strength and speed was in no way inferior. Every time the black general's long sword struck the golden light axe, the resulting collision would bring out a sound that resembled the shrill cries of ghosts!

...

"These people are so strong?"

Han Bi who was standing near Chen Xiaolian was shocked and he blurted out those words in a low voice.

At the moment, there was something odd going on. On the other side of the square, a black general had already stepped forward while the Qin armies' formation on the left side had been fully mobilized to surround the 4 members of Wind Slasher Guild.

However, things were different on this side of the square. Although there were Qin terracotta soldiers lined up in rows regarding them with tiger like eyes, these Qin soldiers were only standing still. There were no indication of them attacking.

Movement on one side and stillness on the other. This created a contradictory scene upon the square.

Being surrounded by such a high number of Qin soldiers nonetheless caused the Awakened ones to feel apprehensive.

"They are not that strong."

The one who spoke out was Miao Yan.

Miao Yan squinted her pair of smiling eyes and was watching the ongoing battle waged by the Wind Slasher Guild with interest. Listening to Han Bi's words, the corners of Miao Yan's lips curled and she softly said. "That black general should have A Class strength. If any of the Wind Slasher Guild members could fight an A Class BOSS to a standstill, they would have become the number one guild amongst Players.

That woman as well. Hmph, throwing out so many pets at once. Controlling so many pets would only exhaust the strength of the owner. Playing a sea of pets strategy? Did you think it was that simple?

The way I see it... the most peculiar aspect of all is that triangular formation they are using.

If I am not mistaken, that must be a formation that could enhance their strength for a short amount of time."

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Miao Yan and thought: This woman has such

a powerful strength and also so much knowledge... in the circle of Awakened ones, she should be someone of note.

But... why was it that the 3 Guild Leaders here, Nangong, Alice and Qiu Yun could not recognize her?

Could it be that she is a lone wolf type of Awakened?

“What should we do? Do we just wait here and watch the show?”

Bei Tai said bitterly. “Although I cannot wait to have those Players die off, but... could it be that we should just wait here for those terracotta soldiers to attack us?”

The sense of unease within Chen Xiaolian’s mind became stronger.

He raised his head to observe the skies. Those dark ink-like clouds had seemingly turned thicker...

“I... I have an opinion.”

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. “We’ll leave this place! Break through the encirclement and head outside the palace!”

“... what?”

Miao Yan stared at Chen Xiaolian. “Are you not going to finish the quest?”

“The difference in strength here is too big,” Chen Xiaolian replied calmly. “Being courageous does not mean being stupid. Look at those 4 black generals. We cannot defeat even one of them. Additionally... the real big BOSS has yet to make his appearance.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian looked at Miao Yan. “Unless, are you confident that you can defeat those 4 black generals? After that, we will have to depend on your strength alone to defeat Bai Qi.”

Miao Yan’s mouth moved but she did not say anything. Her eyes showed disapproval.

“The reason I participated in this instance dungeon was not to complete the quest. It was in order to live on,” Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Han

Bi and Soo Soo. "This is my decision. I had thought about it. Even though there are a huge number of terracotta soldiers, the monsters' level is not high. Thus, we have an opportunity to break through. After that, we will enter the side palace building. From there, we can find our way back to the front hall and leave this Epang Palace.

That is my opinion... do you have any objections?"

Han Bi nodded. "I'll listen to you."

There was no need to ask about Soo Soo who tightly gripped onto Chen Xiaolian's hand.

Bei Tai thought about it. "My brother and I will follow you."

Alice sat on the ground, her face pale. She sighed and said nothing.

When Miao Yan was the only one left, she suddenly smiled. "Since that is how it is, then let us go together."

Chen Xiaolian looked around and pointed at the left side's palace building. "We came here using that path. Thus, we are more familiar with the terrain there. Backtracking would be the most prudent way to go about it."

At that moment, with the exception of Chen Xiaolian and Miao Yan all of them were injured – as for Soo Soo, everyone had subconsciously ignored this little girl.

Hearing Chen Xiaolian's words, they all expressed their approval.

"Then... let us break through."

Chen Xiaolian glanced at the Wind Slasher Guild who were engaged in battle far away and observed the rows of Qin terracotta soldiers standing at attention on the left side. "Kill your way out, but do not keep fighting. If there is an opportunity, rush into the side palace building area. We will use the same path we took to exit Epang Palace."

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian weighed the bronze spear in his hand and took a deep breath. "I will open the way!"

He stepped out, moving towards the left Qin army!

“Head Cleaver!”

The spear drew an arc through the air and cleaved down onto a head!

...

... ..

Qiu Yun stood beside the giant ding.

The black qi swirling beneath him had already reached his waist.

Qiu Yun lowered his head and sneered. “Are you thinking of seizing my body? Bai Qi!”

From the surface of the Tiger Tally held high in his hands, a golden radiance suddenly shone down onto Qiu Yun’s waist area. The radiance caused the madly moving black qi to recoil!

“The God of Slaughter is indeed a God of Slaughter, what a powerful air of brutality! Even this Tiger Tally of the King of Qin could barely restrain you, hmph!”

Qiu Yun narrowed his eyes. Through the Tiger Tally, he could clearly observe everything that was happening at the square through the eyes of the controlled Qin terracotta soldiers.

It appears that the pressure on the Wind Slasher Guild is insufficient. Hmph... offer more of your blood! One more black general! Da Vinci, I want to see if that triangular formation of yours can hold.”

Even more golden radiance burst out from the surface of the Tiger Tally.

Qiu Yun was bathed in the golden light and the area below his waist that was engulfed by the black qi was restored immediately. Under the suppression of the golden light, the black qi had already been pushed down to Qiu Yun’s feet.

The golden light enveloped the giant ding.

“Bai Qi, stop resisting! The King of Qin’s Tiger Tally is in my hands and all the Qin soldiers here must obey the commands of this Tiger Tally! Hahahahahaha!”

Qiu Yun laughed out coldly a few times. Suddenly, he uttered “eh”. He narrowed his eyes. “Chen Xiaolian... you are thinking of breaking through?”

Hmph, you are all vital blood offerings. I cannot simply allow you to run away!”

Qiu Yun tightly gripped onto the Tiger Tally.

The golden light shone out brightly but Qiu Yun’s expression turned increasingly pale. His breathing grew more rapid and weak!

...

Xia Xiaolei was crawling on the ground some distance away. His buttocks was sticking up as he hid behind a bronze censer and he happened to hear Qiu Yun’s words.

“Chen Xiaolian? Eh? Could he be referring to...”

A flicker of determination suddenly flashed through the terrified expression on Xia Xiaolei’s face.

“I am cowardly... but brother Xiaolian’s matter cannot be ignored!”

This timid youngster trembled as he climbed up. He bit down hard on his lips and picked up the bronze censer beside him.

Step by step, step by step, he quietly moved forward, moving closer to Qiu Yun’s back...

Normally, someone like Xia Xiaolei would be unable to even dream of getting close to launch a sneak attack on Qiu Yun...

At that moment however, the Tiger Tally was absorbing Qiu Yun’s strength at a maddening pace. The weakened Qiu Yun gasped in short breaths. Occasionally, he would even have to endure loud ringing sounds in his ears.

As he was panting, he let out a sneer. “Since you want to break through, then I will kill you all first! Only with blood can the power of the soul be unleashed! Black general...”

Just as Qiu Yun uttered those words...

Suddenly...

Bang!

A bronze censer heavily smashed down onto the back of Qiu Yun's head!

Qiu Yun's eyes rolled over and he staggered forward!

The bronze censer was flattened by the impact. However, Qiu Yun was still able to turn behind and stare with wide-open eyes.

He saw a youngster holding onto a bronze censer in his hands. The youngster's face was filled with fear and cowardice as he looked at Qiu Yun. Even his hands were shaking.

"You, you are..."

Xia Xiaolei was on the verge of crying.

He looked down at the flattened bronze censer in his hands and looked at the other party...

Son of a bitch! Why is his head so hard?

In TV, don't people usually faint after being smashed like that?

Qiu Yun's face revealed a sorrowful expression!

"A minor character... how unexpected, to think that I, Qiu Yun would actually... actually be foiled by a minor character... I... I... I cannot accept it argh!!!"

Qiu Yun roared out in frenzy.

He looked at Xia Xiaolei, both hands empty!

Because...

The Tiger Tally had at an unknown moment in time... fallen onto the ground!

Without the golden light from the Tiger Tally, the black qi beneath Qiu Yun's feet crept up madly!

In but moments, it had gone above the waist, then the chest, and then the neck...

The black qi rushed wildly into Qiu Yun's mouth...

Then, Qiu Yun became engulfed within the black qi...

The struggling Qiu Yun displayed a final trace of consciousness and he forced himself to bend down. He extended his hand, reaching out towards the Tiger Tally lying on the ground...

At that moment however, something unexpected happened to Xia Xiaolei as he coincidentally extended out his foot, which kicked the Tiger Tally away slightly.

“...”

Qiu Yun's eyes that still had a trace of consciousness stared intently at Xia Xiaolei. For the first time... his mouth uttered out an expletive!

Qiu Yun howled and finally... fell onto the ground.

The black qi swirled around him and his body was no longer visible.

Xia Xiaolei was scared stiff.

Subconsciously, he bent down to pick up the Tiger Tally. Gripping it tightly in his hands, he looked at the mass of black qi that was gradually becoming thicker...

The youngster was overwhelmed with fear and he retreated one step after another.

He had wanted to turn around and run. However, his legs have turned soft.

Finally...

The black qi completely disappeared! It was as though a suction power was frantically absorbing all the black qi into Qiu Yun's body! The black qi was sucked out from the giant ding non-stop and flowed into Qiu Yun's body!

On the ground, Qiu Yun's face and figure was undergoing a massive

transformation.

The skeletal facial structure, muscles, hair... they have seemingly become clumps of modelling clay and were being kneaded by an invisible force.

The clothes worn by Qiu Yun were enveloped by the black qi and torn apart. Next, a new set of clothes was materialized from the mass of black qi enveloping his body!

...

Chapter 82: Bai Qi

“Charge forward!”

Using the spear, Chen Xiaolian cleaved down onto the head of a terracotta soldier, pulverizing it to pieces!

He then rushed with great strides into the midst of the rows of Qin soldiers. However, the incoming attacks from all sides that he was expecting did not occur.

His spear swept through the Qin soldiers and he was surprised to find...

All the terracotta soldiers were standing still. It was as though they had lost their energy, becoming real stone statues, motionless!

Completely lifeless!

In the distance, the same was happening to the Wind Slasher Guild.

The big-breasted woman's pets tore the terracotta soldiers before it apart. However, none of the terracotta soldiers came forth to kill it. Instead, they all stood still on the same spot. It was as though they had fallen under a paralysis spell.

A good number of them were maintaining their attacking posture... however, their bodies remained immobile.

Even the black general who was trying to kill the younger twin had abruptly turned stiff.

The younger twin's golden axe hacked down onto the general's head. But, the black general did not resist, parry or dodge. He only stood there like clay puppet.

The axe hacked down onto the black general's neck and easily sliced through. The black general was decapitated and his head rolled onto the ground. The younger twin stepped forward and delivered a kick, sending the black general reeling over.

He raised his head and looked around in shock...

Da Vinci's face turned odd. “This... what is going on?”

...

Xia Xiaolei was on the verge of wetting his pants.

Before him, a man wearing white clothes stood up from the ground.

The man has a calm and expressionless face. However, his eyes glinted with blackness!

The white clothed man seemingly gave out a light sigh. He raised both arms and examined his body. Then, a trace of a peculiar smile appeared on his jade coloured face.

He caught sight of Xia Xiaolei and ambled up to Xia Xiaolei's front.

Xia Xiaolei had fallen onto the ground due to fear. His hand was subconsciously gripping onto the Tiger Tally.

The man in white looked at Xia Xiaolei, his eyes focusing onto the Tiger Tally in Xia Xiaolei's hands.

"Return it to me."

The man in white extended his hand out towards Xia Xiaolei.

...

"Charge out!"

Chen Xiaolian had become dumbfounded for a moment. However, he immediately realized that whatever was happening did not matter... this incident was favourable to them!

Why these Qin soldiers suddenly became immobile was something that Chen Xiaolian had no time to consider in detail!

It was more important for them to rush out!

"Run!"

Chen Xiaolian took the lead and brandished the bronze spear along the way, cutting a path open through the rows of Qin soldiers. Behind him, the other Awakened ones followed suit. Bei Tai who was propping up Lun Tai, Miao Yan who was holding onto Alice, Soo Soo and Han Bi all followed behind Chen Xiaolian...

Without the obstruction of the Qin soldiers, they rushed to the top of the stairs and ran into the side palace building...

Chen Xiaolian recalled the way they used to enter and immediately led them through the corridor.

After passing through several corridors, he heard a terrified voice coming from the front!

He then saw a familiar figure running frantically towards them just like a rabbit that was being hunted.

It turned out to be someone familiar... Xia Xiaolei?

"Xia Xiaolei?" Chen Xiaolian blurted out.

Xia Xiaolei caught sight of Chen Xiaolian and his eyes widened. His cries of misery grew even more wretched as he ran madly forward. "Run, hurry up and run! Brother Xiaolian! There is a monster! Help!"

Xia Xiaolei stumbled forward, falling into Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian then held him up. "Why are you here?"

"I... aiya, it is a long story! Xiaolian! Ah, brother Han Bi! The both of you are here! Run, hurry up and run! There is a monster, a monster is chasing after me! He had already eaten up a person! It is too scary!"

"Do not panic!" Chen Xiaolian held onto Xia Xiaolei tightly. "What exactly is going on?"

"Someone wanted to harm you, so I ambushed that person. Then, a monster swallowed him. Then, the monster came after me... aiya, let us not talk about it! We need to hurry up and run!"

Xia Xiaolei turned to look at his back and suddenly screamed out. "He is coming! He is coming!"

From the end of the corridor, a man in white walked into sight.

His manner of movement, coupled with those wide ancient sleeves brought forth a sense of elegance.

The long sleeves were drawn together as both his hands were set to his

back.

This man walked through the corridor of Epang Palace, not a shred of awkwardness within his conduct.

It was as though his character and clothing were one with the palace.

The image he gave off was one of harmony.

At the same time, another feeling inundated the hearts of all the Awakened ones!

The man in white walked forward slowly. However, each step he took, each time he got nearer... what their eyes perceived was...

A mountain pressing down upon them!

This silent aura of might brought a feeling of coldness down their every fibre!

Without saying anything, Chen Xiaolian suddenly threw the bronze spear in his hands out with all his might!

With B Class force that could crush stones behind it, the stone transformed into a meteor and shot towards the face of the man in white.

The man in white gave out a faint smile. With a flick of his finger, the bronze spear was restrained in the middle of the air. Next, a black qi engulfed it and the spear was turned into powder and fell onto the ground!

“... Everyone retreat!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly made a decision!

This atmosphere, this level of power... this is the feeling reserved for the absolute big BOSS!

Chen Xiaolian pulled Soo Soo to him, put Han Bi together with Xia Xiaolei before turning around and run. Bei Tai and the others followed behind.

Taking a few steps, he saw a room upon the corridor with the ‘Water De’ tablet on it.

“Quick, go inside!”

Chen Xiaolian recalled that this was the safety zone of the system. Considering how they have no other option, he could only lead them into the 'Water De' hall.

After all of them had charged into the Water De hall, Chen Xiaolian quickly picked up a bronze censer with his hands. Everyone stood near the entrance, vigilantly looking at the man in white who walked casually until he reached the entrance.

The man in white stood before the entrance, finally stopping his pace. He did not step inside.

Chen Xiaolian inwardly let out a minor sigh:

It seems... the rules for the safety zone are still in play.

The man in white stood before the entrance. He narrowed his eyes and regarded everyone within the room. His black eyes swept through everyone and all who fell under his gaze felt their hearts shivering.

Finally, the man in white's eyes fell upon Xia Xiaolei who was hiding behind Chen Xiaolian.

The man in white extended his right hand. "Return it to me."

A firm voice came forth!

Xia Xiaolei was on the verge of tears as he trembled.

"Return what to him? Did you take anything?" Han Bi whispered.

Xia Xiaolei opened his palms to reveal a Tiger Tally.

"Could this be a storyline requirement? Do we return it to him? What item is this?" Han Bi asked in quick succession.

Xia Xiaolei hesitated. Chen Xiaolian on the other hand, grabbed his wrist and said. "We cannot give it to him!"

Chen Xiaolian stared at the item within Xia Xiaolei's palm, both his eyes bulging widely!

"This is... Tiger Tally?"

He abruptly turned around to look at the man in white.

“One who wields the Tiger Tally with the bearing of nobility. You... you, you are...”

“Gongsun Shi, Bai Qi.”

The man in white maintained an expression of indifference. Even his voice was one of indifference.

Chen Xiaolian’s face became distorted.

Son of a bitch, you really are the BIG BOSS argh!

...

Bai Qi stood outside the room, his jade like face was directed at the people within the room, his expression cold and devoid of emotions. At that moment, the one factor that provided Chen Xiaolian with relief was that Bai Qi could not enter the safety zone.

However...

Chen Xiaolian turned around and looked at everyone. Then, his face changed.

“Where is Miao Yan?”

Chapter 83: Grim Reaper

Han Bi and Bei Tai became shocked while Soo Soo raised her head to look at Chen Xiaolian. Alice continued breathing weakly...

“I, I recall still seeing her as we were running from the square into this side palace building.”

Han Bi reflected on it and spoke those words after a moment of hesitation.

“After that?” Chen Xiaolian furrowed his brows.

“After that, I stopped paying attention. I was too frantic in my attempt to escape, and with so many people... I, I really could not notice,” Han Bi gritted his teeth, his expression showing remorse.

“It is not your fault,” Chen Xiaolian comforted him and let out a bitter smile. “Even I did not realize it. Where had she gone to...”

He gazed outside the room and saw that Bai Qi was actually sitting cross-legged before the entrance, both his eyes slightly closed.

...

On the square, the Wind Slasher Guild was plunged into a bitter fight!

The terracotta soldiers that were immobile akin to clay statues had suddenly regained their vigour along with Bai Qi's resurrection!

Although the Wind Slasher Guild had taken advantage of the earlier opportunity to kill off one of the black generals, the remaining 3 black generals have now stepped onto the field!

The Qin terracotta soldiers from every direction have been mobilized, swarming towards the triangular formation of the Wind Slasher Guild like a tidal wave. They were like the waves smashing down onto the rocky reefs, one wave after another...

It was unknown how many times the big-breasted woman had summoned out her pets. In face of the torrential charge of the Qin soldiers, the pets could only retreat one after another. In mere moments,

they were killed and were transformed into beams of light before disappearing.

The big-breasted woman's face became increasingly ugly as her heart ached incessantly – acquiring all these pets was no easy matter. Each pet's death caused an unrelenting pain within her heart.

The younger twin with the transformed body was fighting off against the 3 black generals. He struggled to endure the joint attacks by the 3 black generals. The younger twin's golden light axe had already been broken and a slash cut him on his chest. He staggered onto a statue of the bronze men, using them to resist. However, he could only block their attacks and could not fight back at all.

Dense number of arrows rained down in waves and the assault by the Qin soldiers had seemingly become indiscriminate. They had totally disregarded the terracotta soldiers that were within the area covered by the rain of arrows!

A huge number of sharp arrows descended upon the surface of the golden cover above the triangular formation. The face of the older twin sitting within the triangular formation had turned as pale as paper!

“Guild Leader!”

The big-breasted woman watched as another one of her War Wolf was killed by a group of Qin soldiers, their countless spears stabbing into it. Blood oozed out from the corner of her mouth and she clenched her teeth. “We won't be able to hold on much longer! Think of something!”

“Soon! Another 28 seconds!” Da Vinci's face remained emotionless. He raised an eyebrow and softly said. “My skill cool down is almost over! Hold on a while longer!”

Da Vinci narrowed his eyes and observed the incoming waves of Qin soldiers; the younger twin was being beaten up by the 3 black generals to the point of spilling blood and losing flesh – the younger twin howled out as his entire left arm was chopped off by a black general!

Blood sprayed onto the surface of the square...

“Another 15 seconds...” Da Vinci clenched his fist tightly.

Hmph, if not for the fact that we had to fight to the death with another Player Guild on the way here, hmph... that damnable Thorned Flower Guild! In order to kill off the team they sent, I had to use my skill...

“Another 6 seconds!” Da Vinci shouted out. “Prepare to withdraw the pets, all members withdraw into the formation!”

“A ah!”

The younger twin suddenly cried out in pain. A sword covered in black qi had pierced into his body!

Blood sprayed out uncontrollably from his mouth and his huge body stature immediately shrunk. In the blink of an eye, he had returned to his original shape. He sat on his buttocks beneath the statue of the bronze men, watching as the black general slashed down with his sword. The younger twin could only close his eyes and wait for death...

“Three, two, one...” A bottomless radiance burst out from within Da Vinci’s eyes!

Weng!

An invisible force suddenly repelled the giant black sword that was about to hack down onto the younger twin’s body! This enormous force actually forced the black general’s body to stagger backwards for a moment. As for the black long sword in his hand, it had slipped past his grasp as it flew off! The sword rotated in the air a number of times before landing on the top of the palace, piercing into the rooftop!

Da Vinci’s hand was extended outwards. In the direction of his extended hand...

Before the younger twin, stood a 3-foot tall pet!

That was a... a smaller version of the Grim Reaper!

The 3-foot tall body was wrapped within black robes. Two streamers hung out from the hood of the robes. There was only shadows where its face should be, whereas 2 clump of green flames appeared from the

location where its eyes should be.

In its hand was a smaller sized sickle that was still bigger than its figure.

Earlier, it was this Grim Reaper's sickle that had repelled the black general's sword!

Da Vinci displayed an expression of haughtiness as he twisted his neck.

His body flashed and he appeared before the younger twin. Using one hand, he hauled the younger twin up and tossed him into the triangular formation.

The tiny Da Vinci looked at the 3 gigantic black generals, the corners of his mouth curling upwards. A strange smile with a profound meaning could be seen on his face.

"It is my turn to give you a lesson!"

His finger gestured in a hook like manner and the 3-foot tall mini Grim Reaper suddenly let out a happy clamour. Its body leapt up and entered Da Vinci's body...

In that moment, a clump of green flames materialized from the surface of Da Vinci's body, flickering with a dazzling radiance!

As for Da Vinci who was standing out in the open space, he had undergone a massive transformation!

Da Vinci had transformed into a...

Grim Reaper!

Long black robes on the exterior and metal gauntlets on both his arms. He wore gloves where each knuckles snugged between each fingers.

Upon the surface of each of his shoulders were skull shaped metallic shoulder guards that emitted ghastly green flames.

A pointy hood covered his head. Under the hood, Da Vinci's face had disappeared only to be replaced with the darkness of the void. Where his eyes should be, two clumps of green flames shone out!

His body floated above the ground and his legs below the robes had transformed into a shroud of faint green light!

His right hand wielded a massive Grim Reaper's scythe! The blade has the shape of a circular moon and a silver coloured skull embedded at its centre!

...

"Pet Fusion Skill. This Da Vinci's strength is quite good."

On top of a side palace building, Miao Yan was seated atop the roof. She squinted her smiling eyes and observed Da Vinci who was standing upon the square. A small curl appeared at the tip of her lips as she squinted her eyes. Her left fingers tapped down onto her temple and she stared at Da Vinci again.

"En... S Class? En, wrong! This should be the additional effect from the formation."

...

Da Vinci who had transformed into the Grim Reaper raised his scythe up high before bringing it down!

Standing before him was the black general that had lost his black long sword. As the scythe was descending, the black general crossed his arms before him in a defensive gesture. Then... ca!

Enveloped with the radiance of green flames, the scythe sliced down through both the black general's arms! As for the protective layer of flaming black qi, the green flames broke through it in an instant!

After that, the black general's black armour was sliced through without any resistance.

After the "ca" sound, the black general staggered 2 steps backwards, his pair of arms falling off his body. Soon after, a thin and straight fissure opened up from the top of his head down to his waist!

The fissure abruptly parted and flaming black qi sprayed outwards. Then, the black general suddenly transformed into a pile of scrap iron

before falling onto the ground.

The other 2 black generals charged forward from both sides!

Da Vinci emitted a long and eerie laughter and his hovering body immediately retreated! His speed was as fast as a ghost. In but a flash, he had created a distance of tens of steps away from them. The scythe in his hand swung once...

The skull in the middle of the scythe's blade suddenly overflowed with green radiance!

A thick pillar of green light shot out and struck one of the black general!

The black general's body trembled and was barely able to raise its giant black sword before its chest, as though it was trying to block off the green pillar of light. However, the green pillar of light suddenly expanded violently!

With a "weng", the pillar of light pierced through both the black general's sword and body at the same time. The black general was directly thrown backwards! Its body soared across the tall staircase and directly collided into the gates of the main palace building!

With a "bang", the armour of the black general broke apart into its respective components: Helm, gauntlets, breastplate, greaves...

A clump of black qi surged in frenzy under the onslaught of the green pillar of light. Finally, it uttered out a sharp ghastly cry before transforming into black wisps and dissipated...

"And then there was one."

Grim Reaper Da Vinci turned around and looked at the final black general.

The black general had already raised up his gigantic sword, hacking down with it!

The flaming black qi descended upon the head of the Grim Reaper. Da Vinci let out a sneer and swung the scythe hard down onto the ground.

Weng!

A green light was discharged out from the blade of the scythe!

The green light streaked out in every direction, akin to a nuclear explosion!

The countless rays of green light pierced through the black general's body! Innumerable fine cracks emerged from the surface of his black armour as the green light penetrated his body. Without creating a sound, the light incinerated the black general's body!

The black long sword clattered onto the ground. A black qi swirled around it and it transformed into black coloured ashes.

The countless rays of green light were scattered throughout the open square and a group of Qin soldiers that were gathered near the triangular formation were turned to black qi and vaporized.

On the ground, even more rays of green light spread outwards like snakes. Within the radius of 50 metres, all the terracotta soldiers within the area were pulverized, turning into gravel, black qi and powder...

With that one skill, one third of the square area filled with terracotta soldiers was cleared!

"That is quite a good AOE skill," Miao Yan crouched down on top of the roof, her eyes narrowed and she let out a faint smile .

...

"Upwards! Go to the main palace building! Kill Qin Shi Huang and the quest will be completed!"

The Grim Reaper Da Vinci laughed loudly and his body floated up the staircase, charging towards the gates of the main palace building...

...

Chen Xiaolian watched as Bai Qi who was seated before the entrance suddenly rose up.

Bai Qi turned his head, and looked towards the square area... it was

unknown what those profound eyes were observing.

“Those who attack the members of the Royal Palace must die.”

Bai Qi shook his head, then...

Chen Xiaolian's eyes bulged out!

From behind Bai Qi, his body suddenly split into two.

Chen Xiaolian watched as another Bai Qi appeared from the back of Bai Qi.

This doppelganger of Bai Qi did not even bother to look at Chen Xiaolian and the others who were in the room. His body flashed and he disappeared from the corridor.

...

Grim Reaper Da Vinci was about to slam into the gates of the main palace building!

Suddenly, his body froze in place!

A man in white clothes and emotionless expression stood silently before Da Vinci.

His body was not very tall and he was dressed only in simple white clothes, not a single armour upon his person. He stood silently before the gates of the main palace building.

“The King's position cannot be violated... DIE!”

Bai Qi did not make any flashy moves. He simply lifted his foot and casually and seemingly with ease... kicked Da Vinci's chest!

The Grim Reaper Da Vinci who had just displayed his godlike prowess flew out like a meteor!

Bang! Bang bang! Bang bang bang!

Da Vinci's body fell onto the stairs, smashing down onto the tiles and bounced around a few times, rolling far away. Finally, he landed onto the other side of the square!

The green flames shrouding his entire body turned dim in that instant!

Bai Qi stood straight before the gates of the main palace building. Suddenly, both his hands slipped into his sleeves. Then, slowly... from within the left sleeve, his right hand pulled out a sword!

The blade of the sword was translucent in colour, akin to that of a transparent crystal. However, within the crystal was a faint mass of crimson coloured blood qi that swirled back and forth!

1 AOE (Area Of Effect) is a term used in games to describe attacks or spells that can affect everything within a specified area.

Chapter 84: Decoy

Within the Water De hall.

Everyone looked nervously at Bai Qi who was seated upon the corridor. Chen Xiaolian's brows were knitted together as he anxiously glanced at the countdown timer in his system.

[Time remaining until Qin Shi Huang's resurrection at 37 minutes and 28 seconds...].

The numbers kept moving continuously.

"Perhaps we should simply stay in here," Lun Tai coughed out blood and said in a low voice. "Even if we do not complete the quest by the time the instance dungeon is over, receiving some punishment won't be the death of us."

His words were met with agreement by Bei Tai.

However, the Black Knights Guild Leader, Alice sneered. "If only it was that simple, then all would be good. But, the system would never give us an opportunity to relax."

"I too believe that things would not be that simple," Chen Xiaolian frowned. "I feel that staying within Epang Palace is too risky. My intuition is telling me that we need to at least get away from Epang Palace. If the first thing that Qin Shi Huang does after his resurrection is to kill off every palace intruders, then we are all goners."

"That is very likely," Alice sighed. "I had once participated in an instance dungeon in a mausoleum located in Europe. The quest was to stop the resurrection of an ancient king. Back then, the number of experts who had entered the instance dungeon was quite considerable. However, my strength was insufficient. After entering the instance dungeon, I was left behind in one of the tombs. There, a group of mummies besieged me. Thanks to an unexpected acquisition of a defensive equipment, I was able to hold on to the end.

A good friend of mine who is a master was able to enter the king's

tomb. He entered the tomb together with several others.

In the end, they failed to stop the king's resurrection. After the king was resurrected, the first thing he did was to drain all the life energies of every living being within the tomb! Everyone inside were turned into mummies.

Because I did not enter the main tomb, I was spared."

Those words by Alice caused everyone to fall silent.

"Epang Palace could be considered as a main tomb," Chen Xiaolian said heavily. "The key point of this is that the system may follow the same style of progress. Stop the resurrection of a dead person, then when the quest failed the punishment is also similar... if every living being within Epang Palace were to have their life energies drained away... staying in here would mean waiting for death."

Chen Xiaolian hesitated and glanced at Soo Soo who was silently staying beside him. He gently stroked her oval face before turning to look at Xia Xiaolei.

"Xiaolei, the things that happened to you earlier, describe it to us in detail. Try not to miss out on any detail."

Xia Xiaolei swallowed his saliva and he slowly recounted how after he entered Epang Palace, he had caught sight of Qiu Yun, how he overheard Qiu Yun's words, how he ambushed him...

He recounted everything.

After he finished, everyone could not help but be filled with relief.

It appeared that Qiu Yun had already made a comprehensive calculation for his plan, including all the Awakened ones in his path into his plans. Unexpectedly, he would be foiled by Xia Xiaolei in the end – just by looking at him, one could deduce that Xia Xiaolei was just a little rookie.

There were no expression of relief upon Chen Xiaolian's face – he was clear that now was not the time to be feeling relieved!

He had caught on to an important factor!

“In other words... after Bai Qi took over Qiu Yun... he had been requesting the Tiger Tally from you. Then, you ran away and he followed you... but he did not attack you?”

“... Err, it seems like he did not,” Xia Xiaolei thought about it and blinked. “He just followed me from behind. No matter how I run, I could not shake him off. However... it is true that he did not attack me.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded and said to himself. “It seems... there is some basis to my speculations.”

He slowly turned to look at everyone else. “Everyone, I have a method. Perhaps...”

...

Two minutes later...

“You mean, one of us is to take the Tiger Tally and lure Bai Qi away while the others use the opportunity to run from Epang Palace?” Bei Tai’s eyes bulged wide.

The others fell silent.

Chen Xiaolian lightly replied. “It is obvious that Bai Qi’s objective is the Tiger Tally. As long as one person takes the Tiger Tally to lure him away, the others will have an opportunity... I cannot guarantee that this method could succeed. However, from what we can understand from the current circumstance, the possibility of success is very high.”

“Then, who will take the Tiger Tally to lure Bai Qi away?”

The one to ask the question was Alice, her tone cold.

“Taking the Tiger Tally to lure Bai Qi away may not necessarily be very dangerous... Xia Xiaolei’s experience from earlier had proven that Bai Qi might not attack the one holding the Tiger Tally.”

“But that is not a sure thing,” Alice shook her head. “If that speculation is wrong, then the one who carries the Tiger Tally to become the decoy will die for certain. Moreover... even if Bai Qi does not attack and only chases after that person, he probably will not allow that person any

opportunity to escape this palace. No matter what happens, once the time ends, the one left behind as the decoy is as good as dead.”

“Perhaps Da Vinci and the others could complete the instance dungeon by stopping Qin Shi Huang’s resurrection?” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “Then, as long as the one left behind as the decoy could endure until the end, that person would be able to live.”

“The possibility for that is uncertain,” Alice shook her head.

“This is the only way we have at present,” Chen Xiaolian pointed outside the door. “If you think that this method is not good, then we can only charge out together and fight to the death with this Bai Qi! However, I would like to say this first. Although Bai Qi had only displayed a little part of his strength, that was enough for me to tell that I am not his match. As for you all... you are all injured.”

Han Bi who had been staying silent, raised his head and slowly asked. “Then... who should be the decoy?”

After this question was forwarded out, everyone turned silent.

They looked at each other in silence.

“I must say this first, not my brother, absolutely not!” Bei Tai stared.

“Alice and Lun Tai, you two are seriously injured. Even if you are to become the decoy, you won’t be able to run fast enough,” Chen Xiaolian said lightly. “So, you two can be excluded.”

Pausing, he looked at Xia Xiaolei. “Xiaolei should not be in too. He had already contributed so much for us by foiling Qiu Yun’s plot.”

“The rest should draw lots to decide,” Alice suddenly spoke out. “This is obviously a task with a high possibility of death. No matter who we send out, it would not be fair. We might as well leave it to God.”

“God? You mean the Development Team?” Chen Xiaolian sneered. “Everything was created by the Development Team, what God. Let us not talk about this.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian softly continued. “However, I agree with you, we

will draw lots.”

Soon, they produced several slips of paper. One of the slips had the word ‘stay’ on it while the other three slips had the word ‘go’ on it. All of them were then rolled and placed together.

After the paper slips were ready, Chen Xiaolian gestured to Han Bi. “You draw first.”

Han Bi’s face turned taut and he picked up one of the paper slips. Looking at it, he saw the word ‘go’ on it.

Han Bi hesitated. Chen Xiaolian glanced at him and gave him a faint smile. “No need to feel hesitant or think that you are cowardly... this is a very dangerous matter. Everyone have their own lives, their own parents and families. No one here has any obligation to sacrifice their lives for the sake of others.”

Han Bi looked relieved and he said in a low voice. “I am sorry... Xiaolian, you entered this instance dungeon for us, you... originally...”

“I did not do this for you alone, there is also Soo Soo,” Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips and smiled.

The next to draw was Bei Tai.

Bei Tai randomly pulled out one of the slips, his face anxious. After unfolding it, he saw the word ‘go’ upon it.

Bei Tai let out a sigh of relief. Then, he looked at Chen Xiaolian and seemed hesitant.

At that moment, the situation was awkward.

There were 2 more slips remaining.

One for Chen Xiaolian and the other for Soo Soo.

In other words, the decoy will be either Soo Soo or Chen Xiaolian!

Han Bi’s face changed! He stared at Chen Xiaolian and turned to look at Bei Tai.

Bei Tai turned furious. “What are you looking at me for! You drew it

yourself! Hmph, you people are in league! Could it be that I must be the one to be the decoy?"

"Enough! Stop fighting!"

Chen Xiaolian shouted out without any emotion on his face.

He randomly picked up one of the strips and looked at it after unfolding it. Then, he suddenly placed both the strips of paper into his mouth. Munching heavily, he swallowed them down!

"All right, I got the one to stay," Chen Xiaolian stood up.

"You..." Han Bi's eyes turned red.

Soo Soo pulled Chen Xiaolian's clothes. "Oppa..."

"All right, no need to talk about it anymore," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "Go back and find your sister. Tell her... En, tell her that I will be a bit late."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Han Bi and spoke heavily. "Do not say anything! I have but one thing to ask of you... bring Soo Soo out! Protect her properly... be sure to bring her to Qiao Qiao! I am counting on you!"

Han Bi's face was one of shame and he gritted hard on his teeth.

"That is enough, there is no need for you to say anything," Chen Xiaolian patted Han Bi's shoulder. "Truth be told, your injuries are not light. I would be able to run faster as the decoy. There is no need for you to feel guilty."

Xia Xiaolei who was at the side suddenly cried out. "Big Brother Xiaolian..."

"Don't cry!" Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile. "I am not dead yet! It is also uncertain if I would die! Enough, the countdown is still ticking away, don't waste any more time!"

Soo Soo raised her small face and tightly gripped onto Chen Xiaolian's clothes, unwilling to let go. Chen Xiaolian crouched down and patted Soo Soo's hair. "Remember my words and carry it to your sister. This is very important! You will be doing me a huge favour!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian placed a light kiss onto Soo Soo's forehead only to see Soo Soo tearing up all over her face.

"Hey, you are the second personality. You should be calm and emotionless," Chen Xiaolian smiled and wiped the tears from her face.

"I am not going, I will follow oppa," Soo Soo vigorously shook her head and stared at Chen Xiaolian. "I will go wherever you go!"

Chen Xiaolian sighed. His hand reached behind Soo Soo's neck and then...

A palm strike!

Soo Soo's body that had not been strengthened like him tilted over. She looked at Chen Xiaolian with surprise before losing consciousness.

"I am counting on you, Han Bi."

Chen Xiaolian handed Soo Soo over to Han Bi.

Chen Xiaolian walked before Xia Xiaolei and took the Tiger Tally from his hands. Weighing it in his hands, he forced out a smile. "It is quite heavy. This item is an antique. If it is brought outside, it would be priceless. Give it to me, all right? I will be taking advantage of you ah!"

"Wu wu wu wu... big brother Xiaolian..." Xia Xiaolei sobbed. "I, I... I am too cowardly, I am scared... I am sorry, I am sorry towards you..."

"You have done very well. If not for you disrupting Qiu Yun's plans, we would probably be trapped to death within the square. We would not have this chance to escape," Chen Xiaolian comforted him and patted him on his shoulder.

Turning around, Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. "Everyone, after I leave, I... I will be running in the direction of the open square area! Wait for me to lure Bai Qi away and run towards the front hall! Escaping from Epang Palace will be considered a victory! Then... you should all find a place to hide and wait for the instance dungeon to end."

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian gave an inward grunt. He stopped talking nonsense and turned around, striding out of the door of the room!

Seeing Chen Xiaolian walking out while carrying the Tiger Tally, Bai Qi who was sitting cross-legged immediately got up. His pair of eyes stared at Chen Xiaolian. "Return it to me."

"You want it? Then come with me!"

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and smiled before quickly running towards the open square with all his might!

Bai Qi's expression remained indifferent. He regarded the people within the room for a moment before removing his gaze. His body flashed and he proceeded to chase after Chen Xiaolian!

Dressed in those white clothes, he stepped forward through the corridor. However, it seemed as though he was capable of teleportation. Every step he took propelled him tens of metres ahead!

Chen Xiaolian ran with all he has while Bai Qi followed in a laid-back manner. The two of them turned to the other side at the end of the corridor and disappeared from view.

...

Chapter 85: Plotting To Kill

In one breath's time, Chen Xiaolian ran out of the corridor. Turning around, he saw the emotionless and indifferent expression on Bai Qi's face.

His heart tensed before easing up.

At least his initial assumption was correct: Bai Qi was not showing any indication that he will attack Chen Xiaolian.

It seems... with the Tiger Tally in my hands, Bai Qi will not attack me?

Looking forward, he saw that he had arrived at the gates of the side palace building. Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly as he pushed open the gates and rushed into the central open square area.

"I did not expect that... I would return here."

Chen Xiaolian strode outwards and stood atop the stairs. Turning around, he saw that Bai Qi was following right behind him. The gates behind them closed with a bang.

Bai Qi extended his hand out. "Return it to me."

"Do you have any other fixed lines of dialogue other than that?" Chen Xiaolian deliberately smiled and retreated.

At that moment, a miserable cry emitted out from the square!

...

Upon the square, another Bai Qi was wielding onto the translucent sword as he stamped down onto one of the twins chest (Chen Xiaolian was unable to identify which was the older and which was the younger). The Player lied upon the floor as he let out a wretched cry only to see Bai Qi's sword piercing into his chest!

The crimson coloured blood upon the surface of Bai Qi's sword blade flashed. A crimson blood essence rose from the Player's chest and flowed through the translucent blade as it was absorbed into the long sword held by Bai Qi!

The Player's head tilted to one side and died, his body withering at a rapid pace!

Chen Xiaolian looked around and was immediately able to find the other members of Wind Slasher Guild within the square.

The big-breasted woman was already dead, her body strewn on the ground with her back facing the skies. Her manner of death was extremely gruesome.

All four of her limbs were cut apart! It was apparent that these were the handiwork of those terracotta soldiers. Additionally, there were also several spears piercing into her body.

As for the other twin, his body leaned against one of the bronze men, one of his arms missing.

His head was cut off and rested on the ground beneath his legs! As for his body, it had already been drained dry!

Finally... Chen Xiaolian saw Da Vinci!

Da Vinci... he was wearing the black robes of a Grim Reaper, but the two skulls on his shoulders had been battered out of shape.

Even the scythe in his hand had been bent out of shape, the blade of the scythe itself having been partially broken! It seemed as though a certain force had directly cut it!

Chen Xiaolian had originally not recognized him as Da Vinci. However, he then heard Da Vinci's furious howl and was able to identify him as Da Vinci.

Da Vinci howled out furiously. "Impossible! How is this possible? How can the guardian be this strong? How could an impossible quest appear? This is unreasonable! Unreasonable!"

Bang!

The doppelganger Bai Qi had already flashed beside him, the blade of his sword descending. Da Vinci raised his scythe to block it and his body ended up flying off from the slash. After he fell onto the ground, his

scythe broke into two!

A gap opened from Da Vinci's Grim Reaper robes.

After his blood flowed out, Da Vinci returned to his original form.

The Grim Reaper's robes, scythe, green light, all of them disappeared.

The braids on Da Vinci's head fell down and his face was stained with blood. He lied upon the ground, inhaling far more than he exhaled as he continued muttering:

"How is this possible... the BOSS' strength is clearly far beyond that of Players... this is imbalanced, the system... there must be an issue with the system... there should not be a quest that cannot be completed... I, I cannot accept it argh!"

Pu!

A sword pierced into his chest, draining him of his blood essence and turning him into a withered corpse!

The doppelganger Bai Qi straightened himself and his emotionless eyes fell upon the other Bai Qi who was beside Chen Xiaolian.

Suddenly, the doppelganger Bai Qi who was wielding the crimson sword suddenly disappeared and reappeared beside Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian sensed the sky piercing blood thirst emanating from these two Bai Qi. Then, these two walked into each other, merging into one...

Chen Xiaolian instinctively moved backwards. He moved down the stairs one step after another, each step taking him down the central square.

Bai Qi held onto his sword with one hand and slowly moved down the stairs. Upon his skin that originally resembled white jade, a faint colour of blood have seemingly been added.

"Return it to me."

Bai Qi's sword was directed at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian sensed danger!

He could clearly sense... this time, it was likely that Bai Qi would not refrain from taking any action! This time around, if I still refuse to hand it over... I fear that Bai Qi will really attack me!

He could clearly sense that this Bai Qi before him and the one that he had met earlier before the doppelganger was created ... the killing intent emanating from the current Bai Qi's body was far more violent than the earlier one!

If the earlier Bai Qi was comparable to a chilly ice, then at this moment... this Bai Qi that had merged with the doppelganger was comparable to a mass of intense flames!

...

The fingers gripping onto the Tiger Tally were quivering – Chen Xiaolian's heart was feeling terrified. He was not someone devoid of emotions. It was only natural that he feel fearful at a time like this. At that moment however, he could only clench his teeth tightly and stared at Bai Qi who was standing before him.

Bai Qi had absorbed too much blood essence.

As the four members of Wind Slasher Guild were killed off, Chen Xiaolian had observed how Bai Qi had pierced his sword into the Wind Slasher Guild members' chest and drained out a fiery crimson essence. Additionally, there was also the appearance of the colour of blood on Bai Qi's complexion...

This transformation was clearly not limited to the exterior.

Chen Xiaolian was also able to clearly sense something else. The body of this Bai Qi before him... now has a faint trace of life essence?

Chen Xiaolian looked at the sword within Bai Qi's hand and heavily gritted his teeth. He abruptly mustered all his strength to throw the Tiger Tally towards the main palace building!

After that, he turned tail and ran!

No matter how he thought about it, Chen Xiaolian believed that this was the only thing that the current him could do.

The Tiger Tally drew an arc across the air.

The power of B Class strength was fully displayed, allowing the Tiger Tally to be thrown both far and high.

Bai Qi's body flashed and his body shot out like a meteor!

However...

There was one person whose actions were faster than Bai Qi!

Back when Chen Xiaolian's hand was moving to make the throw, Miao Yan had already made her move. She leapt down from the top of the roof towards it!

Seeing the Tiger Tally flying over in her direction, both of Miao Yan's eyes revealed looks of surprise. She leapt off the roof and saw Bai Qi approaching at an incredible speed. Miao Yan reached out with her hand and caught hold of the Tiger Tally with her hand!

"Return it to me!"

The ink black eyes of Bai Qi suddenly erupted with a sky piercing killing intent! The translucent, blood coloured long sword shot out, stabbing towards Miao Yan!

Chen Xiaolian was dumbfounded!

He who had already ran all the way to the side palace building gates did not expect to see Miao Yan descend from the skies – when did this woman secretly run back to the square?

Seeing Miao Yan intercepting the Tiger Tally that he had thrown out, Chen Xiaolian could only stand there in shock. Then... he subconsciously stopped moving.

Both of Miao Yan's eyes stared intensely at Bai Qi's sword that had arrived before her. Her body twisted around in the middle of the air continuously and she dodged 3 times!

However, each of Bai Qi's sword strike was hard to shake off, each of them aimed towards Miao Yan's heart. Miao Yan continuously made 3 different movements in mid-air, each with extreme speed, so much so that only an after image could be seen.

But, Bai Qi was even faster!

Ca!

Miao Yan grunted as the skin-tight garment she wore suffered from a split to the chest area. Despite that, it was apparent that she did not receive any injuries to even her skin. Who knows what level of protective suit was her skin-tight garment for it to have such a high level of durability!

Miao Yan violently shoved out the palm of her hand and a golden sphere of light expanded outwards. She then took the opportunity to make a roll in the air and leap down to her back.

Watching Bai Qi break out of the golden light, Miao Yan revealed a slight sneer. "Xiaolian, catch!"

She threw the Tiger Tally over!

Before Chen Xiaolian could make any reaction, he saw that the Tiger Tally had already arrived before him after shooting through the air. Grievance rose within his heart: Is this woman trying to kill me?

Before he could take any actions, the Tiger Tally had already fallen onto Chen Xiaolian's arms – this woman, her throwing skill sure was accurate!

Bai Qi roared out like a tiger. His body that was originally charging towards Miao Yan stopped in mid-air. Then, he turned around and pounced towards Chen Xiaolian.

"Are you plotting to kill me?"

Chen Xiaolian cursed out and was about to throw the Tiger Tally away again. However, he heard Miao Yan shout out. "You cannot give it to him. Or else, we are dead!"

Chen Xiaolian did not even have the time to consider anything as the

aura from Bai Qi's sword enveloped him.

In but a moment's time, he felt himself losing every ounce of energy within his body. It was as though an enormous pressure was bearing down against him to the point where he could not even move his fingertips!

Seeing the tip of the blade coming towards his body, Chen Xiaolian lamented inwardly and closed his eyes as he waited for death.

At the same time that Bai Qi was pouncing towards Chen Xiaolian, Miao Yan had already leapt over!

She properly adjusted her posture and quickly used her fingers to form a strange seal. A piercing sound emanated out and a beam of silvery light shot out from Miao Yan's fingertip!

The silver ray of light shot towards Bai Qi's back. Bai Qi grunted; he gave up on trying to stab Chen Xiaolian and turned around. His translucent sword was used to deflect the silver beam of light.

Ding!

This clear sound reverberated, causing Chen Xiaolian's ears to buzz.

He looked at the beam of silvery light that was suspended in the middle of the air. Surprisingly, it was a translucent object that appeared to be made of light...

"That, that son of a bitch is a flying sword?" Chen Xiaolian blurted out.

Miao Yan had already landed down at an area no more than 10 metres away from Chen Xiaolian. Her fingers moved about, manipulating the small silver flying sword to continuously attack Bai Qi.

Bai Qi brandished his sword, his blade moved gracefully, like the floating clouds and flowing river. The sounds of collisions resounded without respite. Yet, no matter how profound the attacks executed by the small silver flying sword, they were all blocked off by Bai Qi.

"Chen Xiaolian! Hurry up and break the array!" Miao Yan's face was somewhat pale and she snapped out. "If you do not break it, we will all

die!”

“Huh? Break the array?” Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

“The Five Elements Array!” Miao Yan’s body trembled – Bai Qi split the small flying sword into two with one strike causing the small flying sword to wail out and its silver radiance to grow dimmer. Miao Yan exhaled and spoke in a firm tone. “Act according to my instructions!”

Notice: For fellow readers who read this novel before 9th of June 2016, the name ‘Autumn Stone Guild’ have been changed to ‘Meteor Rock Guild’. Very sorry for my mistake... shamefully facepalming

Chapter 86: Bai Qi's War Soul

Truthfully, Chen Xiaolian had wanted to throw away the Tiger Tally in his hands and run away into the side palace building.

At that moment however, a mysterious impulse came over him and he chose to believe in Miao Yan!

In a fluster, he scrambled down the stairs and onto the square area – Bai Qi howled out several times and attempted to pounce towards Chen Xiaolian. However, he was stopped by Miao Yan's small silver flying sword every time!

Chen Xiaolian stood upon the square and looked around...

Break the array, break the array... break the Five Elements Array... how do I break it?

An idea suddenly flashed through his mind!

Duke Wen of Qin chopping down the tree!

Chen Xiaolian ran frantically towards the 12 bronze men statues!

The 12 bronze statues were arranged orderly on the 2 sides below the stairs leading to the main palace building. Chen Xiaolian ran to the side of one of the bronze statues. Observing the bronze statue that was over 10 metres in height, he clenched his teeth and proceeded to push it with all his might!

The bases for the bronze statues were embedded down into the ground. Chen Xiaolian roared out like a tiger time and again as he exerted his B Class strength to push. The sounds of “ka ka” could be heard as the stone used to hold the base broke!

He had managed to push out the bronze statue by a small distance!

“It is too heavy!” Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth and howled out.

Miao Yan grew nervous. She directed the small silver flying sword to attack Bai Qi for a moment as she leapt through the air and arrived beside Chen Xiaolian. With one palm, she slapped onto the surface of the

bronze statue!

A “weng” sound rang out and the bronze statue was propelled forward by 7 to 8 metres!

What an amazing level of strength!

Chen Xiaolian’s mind was stunned.

However, Miao Yan suddenly grunted and spat out a mouthful of blood.

It turned out that as she was directing her focus away from the fight, Bai Qi had already hacked down onto the small silver flying sword once again. The small silver flying sword was forced back 10 metres and its silver radiance grew even dimmer.

“Damn it!” Miao Yan was terribly enraged. She twisted around and leapt upwards. This time, she was no longer manipulating the flying sword. Instead, she extended her hand and caught the flying sword with her palm. Miao Yan raised her brows and sped towards Bai Qi!

This woman was actually going to fight against Bai Qi!

Chen Xiaolian was like an ant attempting to shake a tree. He exerted his all to push the bronze statue towards the catalpa tree.

One metre, two metres... three metres...

Miao Yan grunted out in pain non-stop. Chen Xiaolian looked upwards distractedly and saw that Miao Yan’s hair was already dishevelled and she spat out 2 mouthfuls of blood in succession.

The skin-tight garment on her body also sported more damaged areas; lines could be seen on her shoulders and waist area!

Some of those places were broken through and blood slowly trickled out from there.

“Why are you looking at me? Do not be distracted!” Miao Yan gritted her teeth.

The radiance of the small silver sword that she was holding has turned very weak. She took a deep breath and used her fingers to form another

seal. This time, 2 flying swords flew out from behind her!

These 2 flying swords seemed far bigger in comparison to the first small silver sword – however, Chen Xiaolian could clearly see that despite being bigger, the radiance upon them were not as pure and were somewhat overextended.

Bigger but less pure.

The 2 swords stabbed towards Bai Qi. Miao Yan herself charged upwards again and used the 3 swords to hold Bai Qi back!

“A a ahh!”

Chen Xiaolian howled out with all his might, the veins on his forehead rising to the surface. The distance between him and the catalpa tree grew closer... 30 metres... 20 metres...

Chopping the tree... en, in other words, using Metal to overcome Wood... that is not right. According to the story, they needed to use red ropes and wear red clothes... en, that is Fire! Fire! That is right! In this Five Elements Array, Fire is... Fire is blood!

Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth and rushed towards the side of the catalpa tree. Without showing any hesitation, he used his finger to cut his left wrist!

Blood flowed out and was poured onto the trunk of the tree!

The blood stained onto the surface of the catalpa tree and flowed rapidly downwards onto the stone tiles below...

Chen Xiaolian turned around to see the bronze statue.

He calculated the distance and shouted out loudly. “Miao Yan! Cut down this bronze statue! Smash it on the tree!”

Miao Yan who was some distance away was being pushed back by Bai Qi. The 2 swords that she had summoned out were destroyed by Bai Qi!

At that moment, Miao Yan shouted furiously. “I am a woman! You would hit me so heavily? Go die! Scumbag man!”

Her left hand clenched into a fist and a golden glow radiated from the surface of her fist!

This skill of hers was one that Chen Xiaolian had witnessed before in the mercury secret chamber. Back then, Miao Yan had used this fist that was glowing with a golden radiance to smash the stone platform into fine powder in one hit...

Miao Yan's fist was thrown forward. Bai Qi sneered and took a step back, one hand holding onto the hilt of his sword while the other was placed on the blade. Then, a "weng" sound resonated out!

The golden fist struck onto the surface of Bai Qi's blade and Bai Qi was propelled backwards by tens of metres. He was sent nearly all the way back to the edge of the square!

The clothes upon his entire being fluttered about, his black hair forced to scatter about. However, he remained standing in the middle of the air, exuding a stunning atmosphere!

That fist did not appear to have brought any harm towards him?

"He sure can take hits!"

Miao Yan scoffed and leapt to the side of the bronze statue. With her sword, she sliced down onto the base of the statue.

Keng!

The bronze man statue's legs were abruptly cut two thirds deep!

Miao Yan exhaled and her body staggered for an instant – she appeared to be exhausted. As she was about to use her flying sword to cut another time, Bai Qi had already rushed towards them!

This time, a black qi that rose to the skies shrouded Bai Qi! It was as though his entire being was wrapped up within a mass of black wind.

He sneered. Then, as though intentionally, he too extended his left hand and formed a fist with it!

A sphere of black qi instantly swirled together!

Miao Yan cried out miserably and was sent flying! Her body smashed heavily onto the side palace building's stairs and bounced about, smashing apart who knows how many tiles on the stairs.

“Xiaolian! Hurry up!”

Miao Yan lied on the floor and struggled for a moment before hissing out.

Seeing that there was still one third of the bronze man statue's leg remaining, Chen Xiaolian bit down on his teeth and howled out, throwing himself onto it!

With a “bang”, a flower of blood blossomed! Blood flowed all over the place, and the Tiger Tally that he was holding became soaked in blood!

As for Bai Qi, he had already charged towards Chen Xiaolian!

His long sword cut through the air!

Chen Xiaolian only had enough time to close his eyes...

Suddenly, an explosive fire dragon swirled over!

Chen Xiaolian could hear a clear sound originating from his side!

From amidst the flames, a blazing phoenix soared up to the skies making its appearance within the square! The crimson coloured flames dispersed away the dark, black clouds hovering in the skies!

Bai Qi placed his sword before his chest, using it to block the incoming flames. Bai Qi's body staggered. However, before he could do anything else...

Uttering a loud and clear cry, the blazing phoenix that was hovering above the skies had made its descent! It shot down like a meteor, smashing down onto Bai Qi!

Boom!

The surrounding tens of metres of area that Bai Qi was standing upon was engulfed by flames! The raging flames danced chaotically and even the enclosing walls of a palace building behind him were reduced to

ashes!

Chen Xiaolian turned around and saw a tiny and familiar figure standing by the entrance of the side palace building. Standing there with both her arms maintaining a posture of pushing forward, her chest rose up and down as she gasped for breath.

“Soo... Soo Soo?”

Soo Soo’s eyes gazed towards Chen Xiaolian and her small body trembled. With an exhausted voice, she stuttered out. “Xiaolian... oppa, you... I will go wherever you go!”

Ptong.

The little girl knelt onto the ground and fell to the side before losing consciousness.

...

Amidst the fire, Bai Qi held on to his sword and slowly stepped out!

The flames had burnt the white gown that he was wearing and even scorched many areas of his body.

However, as he was walking out of the flames, a clump of black qi surged through the surface of his body, then... the burnt areas were immediately restored to its original jade white condition. Even his burnt white robes were being restored to its original state!

“Chen Xiaolian!”

Miao Yan shouted out loud. “Do not waste this opportunity! Hurry up!”

Chen Xiaolian forced down the impulse to run over to Soo Soo’s side. He turned around and shouted loudly!

This time, he summoned out his Four-Eyed War Cat!

Garfield roared out and followed Chen Xiaolian’s instruction to pounce onto the bronze statue. At the same time, Chen Xiaolian raised up his fist.

“Fall!”

Boom!

Both man and cat charged onto the thigh of the bronze statue!

Two B Class strength were stacked together...

Finally...

The remaining one-third area of the bronze statue's legs that was still connected to the bottom broke!

A thunderous sound reverberated out and the bronze statue smashed down! It smashed down onto the top area of the catalpa tree!

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha...

There was a continuous sound of fracturing.

The trunk of the catalpa tree split and it tilted before falling onto the square!

...

Bai Qi who was still stepping forward, suddenly shook. He was frozen in place!

With a "weng" sound, the translucent blood coloured long sword that was being held by him suddenly transformed into a golden light, which fragmented away!

The white robes upon him also suddenly transformed into withered leaves, which next transformed into floating ashes.

As for his body, a certain force suddenly surged madly beneath his skin. That something continuously flowed through his face and torso.

Bai Qi attempted to move forward but his movements have turned clumsy. After taking but a step, his body fell with one knee down on the ground!

His body abruptly shrunk down!

A mass of black qi seemed to have engulfed him. Finally, Bai Qi who was right before them disappeared!

On the surface of the ground... there was only something thin and narrow...

Chen Xiaolian moved forward, lowering his head to examine it. Then, his face changed.

Surprisingly that was...

Half of a Tiger Tally!

Bai Qi had disappeared!

He had been transformed into... a half portion of a Tiger Tally!

Picking it up, Chen Xiaolian found that it just happened to fit together with the other half portion of the Tiger Tally within his hand, transforming into one whole Tiger Tally. They were connected seamlessly!

Chen Xiaolian stared at the whole Tiger Tally in his hands in shock. Suddenly, he heard a message appear from his system.

[System prompt: You have killed the guardian! According to your degree of contribution, you have acquired a reward of 1,000 points].

[System prompt: You have acquired an important prop 'Bai Qi's Soul'. The current level of this equipment is 'A' Class, growth capacity: '?' Class. Using this equipment will summon out Bai Qi's War Soul, useable once every 24 hours. Using it will consume the owner's energy. This equipment is bound to the owner. Before the owner's death, this equipment cannot be transferred].

Below it was a small row of words:

[Skill cool down countdown: 23 hours 59 minutes 59 seconds...].

The numbers kept moving...

Tiger Tally?

Bai Qi's Soul?

Su... Summon Bai Qi out to do battle?

An overwhelming sense of happiness suddenly struck Chen Xiaolian to the point where he nearly fainted!

1 The story of Duke Wen of Qin chopping down the catalpa tree was described in .

Chapter 87: Miao Yan's Insinuation

Cough cough cough

Miao Yan coughed out violently.

Blood continued to flow into this woman's mouth. She then spat them out to the side and propped herself up. She forced herself to move to Chen Xiaolian's side and glanced at the Tiger Tally in Chen Xiaolian's hand.

She gave a faint smile. "The loot should be quite good, right?"

Chen Xiaolian's heart became tense before quickly easing up. He looked at Miao Yan, not knowing what to say.

"Don't worry... I have no interest in grabbing your item," Miao Yan exhaled – due to the tears sustained by the skin-tight garment, Chen Xiaolian was able to observe a tear upon this woman's front breast area... the tear revealed the outline of a billowing curve and a particularly soft, white valley...

Chen Xiaolian quickly averted his gaze.

"A Summon Type equipment? What level is it at?"

Chen Xiaolian was silent for a moment before telling the truth. "A Class."

"That is considered very good," Miao Yan gave a faint laugh. "Bai Qi's strength should be of the S Class. However, according to system rules: any equipment or pet that is obtained from within the instance dungeon will be returned to its initial level. That is why the Bai Qi that you have will be weakened and cannot display out the incredible level of strength observed earlier. However, that is already very good. At the very least, you have seen how far he can progress in the future. Aim for that as you nurture him and think of ways to level him up. One day, if you could let Bai Qi be restored to the state that we encountered earlier..."

Chen Xiaolian's heart pounded. "Level up... how do I level him up?"

“There should be an explanation in the system. However, Bai Qi is a Dark Spirit. According to the division of categories, his attribute should be of the force of Darkness. Thus, in order to level up, he would likely require some materials with force of Darkness attribute. As for the specifics, you will have to slowly search it up.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head and carefully placed the Tiger Tally into the system.

After that, he quickly ran off towards Soo Soo. He held her up.

The little girl's body was limp and light, allowing Chen Xiaolian to carry her up. Her eyes were closed, both her face and forehead were covered with soot. Chen Xiaolian extended his hand to wipe them off.

“Back when we were fighting Newton and this time too, you have saved me,” Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile. “I have been saved by you twice now.”

Soo Soo who was within his bosom suddenly opened her eyes. Glancing at Chen Xiaolian, both her hands reached out to forcefully hug Chen Xiaolian's neck. Then, her mouth moved down to viciously bite Chen Xiaolian's shoulder!

Chen Xiaolian sucked in a cold breath. “Hey! Are you a little puppy?”

Soo Soo stopped biting. She then raised her head to stare at Chen Xiaolian. “Who asked you to toss me aside?”

“I...” Chen Xiaolian's heart turned soft. He said in a low voice. “I just want to...”

“I don't care!” Soo Soo clenched her teeth and puffed up her face into a bun like shape. “You are not allowed to cast me aside in the future! I will go wherever you go!”

“Ah?” Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

Soo Soo looked Chen Xiaolian in the eye, her expression suddenly turning somewhat bashful. “Xiaolian oppa, I am only 10 years-old... you, you just wait 10 years... nono, 8 years... no, no, just 6 years! Just wait for 6

years, all right? I, in the future, I will become Xiaolian oppa's girlfriend, all right?"

"..." Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded. "You, you should not be talking nonsense... I am not a lolicon argh!"

"Hey! Are you 2 done being intimate?"

Miao Yan's voice of discontent came over.

Miao Yan was leaning onto one of the bronze statues, her left pinky picking her ears. She spoke in a dissatisfied manner. "At least consider where we are! The instance dungeon has yet to be completed! There is only 5 minutes left in the countdown to Qin Shi Huang's resurrection, you know?"

Chen Xiaolian put on a poker face and suddenly placed Soo Soo across his knees before slapping her in her buttocks. He firmly spoke. "Next time, don't spout nonsense again! Understand?"

After saying that, he disregarded Soo Soo's pursed lips expression. He grabbed her and ran towards Miao Yan.

"I am really not a lolicon..."

"There is no need for you to explain anything to me," Miao Yan smiled and waved her hand. "I do not care about these matters."

Pausing, she saw that Chen Xiaolian's face had turned black. She then laughed. "All right, the guardian have been taken care of..."

"That is right, according to the degree of contribution, how much points did you get?"

"... 3,000 points," Miao Yan softly replied.

Oh well.

Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter laugh.

Sure enough, the greater the contribution, the greater the reward. There is no way to gain things easily.

Looking down at Soo Soo, he saw her raising up 2 fingers. "Oppa, I got

200 points... what kind of thing is this point?"

"...I tell you about it when we return."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Miao Yan. "What next? Enter the main palace building? Stop Qin Shi Huang's resurrection?"

"Yes," Miao Yan nodded her head. "Hurry up, there is only 3 minutes left."

...

Two adults and one child moved up the stairs and through the main palace building gates... a fat Four-Eyed War Cat followed behind them.

This time, there was no force outside the gates obstructing their progress.

After walking into the main palace building, the first thing Chen Xiaolian felt was shock:

This main palace building was surprisingly spacious!

The second thing Chen Xiaolian felt was... bareness.

Within the huge palace, there were no flamboyant ornaments or furnishings, even things like bronze censers or engravings... there were none of those in general.

There was only one item right in the middle, it was... a jade coffin.

The three of them walked carefully to the side of the jade coffin.

"Do you... want to open it up and see what is inside?" Miao Yan turned to Chen Xiaolian.

"... forget it," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "It is said that Qin Shi Huang was a slouching, skinny and ill person. What is there to see? Besides... he was a heroic man of his generation. We should show some respect and not open his coffin."

Chen Xiaolian pondered. "Oh, right! How do we stop his resurrection? There are no items or indications here."

"How to stop his resurrection eh?" Miao Yan smiled in a peculiar

manner.

She suddenly walked to the side of the jade coffin and pressed down both her hands onto the surface of the coffin...

Shua!

With a white light, the jade coffin disappeared!

“En? What is going on?”

“Fool, of course it has been kept by me,” Miao Yan softly answered.

Ke, kept?!

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes bulged widely. “You... you aren’t by chance planning on taking Qin Shi Huang’s jade coffin away, are you? This item can be kept into the system?”

“Sure enough, you are indeed a rookie,” Miao Yan smiled. “After you have some more experience, you will understand. Many items within an instance dungeon can be kept into the system to be taken away. Also... many monsters can be kept as War Pets. Oh, right! That Four-Eyed War Cat of yours can be thrown away for real.”

After saying that, Miao Yan lowered her head to look at Garfield who was crouched down beside Chen Xiaolian’s thigh.

Garfield: “Meow?”

“Forget it... you are a queer fellow. It is up to you what pet you want to use. Besides, you can still adopt a more powerful pet in the future,” Miao Yan glanced at Chen Xiaolian. “Why do you think I am not trying to seize the Tiger Tally from you? An equipment that can summon out Bai Qi, any Players and Awakened ones will have their eyes turn red as they frantically attempt to snatch it.”

“...” Chen Xiaolian was speechless.

“I am not snatching it away from you because, firstly, you are quite a sight for sore eyes. Secondly, the biggest reward in this instance dungeon is Qin Shi Huang’s coffin. That item is mine for sure. As for the others, I will not snatch it from you.”

Qin Shi Huang's coffin...

Is the biggest reward?

As expected... right after Miao Yan finished speaking, the system issued a prompt.

[System prompt: Instance dungeon quest 'Stop Qin Shi Huang's resurrection' complete. Assigning reward based on calculated degree of contribution... according to the calculations, you have acquired a system reward of 500 points].

Chen Xiaolian was surprised and he turned to glance at Miao Yan.

Miao Yan smiled. "You obtained reward points? En, as for how much I got, I won't tell you. That way, you won't feel inferior, rookie."

At that moment, the system issued out another prompt.

[System prompt: This instance dungeon has ended. In one minute's time, the surviving Players will be transferred out of the instance dungeon. The order of transfer will follow the degree of contribution].

After seeing the prompt, Chen Xiaolian immediately turned to Miao Yan. "By the way... I still want to thank you. If not for you, this instance dungeon would have ended in failure. I have a question though... back then, you gave me the Tiger Tally and told me not to give it to Bai Qi. You said that once we give it to him, our quest will fail. Why is that?"

Miao Yan winked. "... If I were to say I was lying to you, would you believe me?"

"...lie, you lied to me?" Chen Xiaolian's hairs stood on end. "You... you nearly got me killed!"

"Calm down. Besides, you are still alive now, aren't you?" Miao Yan pursed her lips to the side. "Everything within this game's instance dungeon is filled with cruelty. The fact that I did not try to harm you is an act of kindness on my part. Fooling you once in a while to take advantage of you is nothing big. Besides, you have gained quite a haul as a result."

"You... you were really lying to me?"

“... yes,” Miao Yan suddenly stopped smiling and stared at Chen Xiaolian, slowly speaking. “Just consider it as me making use of you, letting you hold the Tiger Tally to stall Bai Qi so that I can take advantage of the situation and attack him. En, that is how it went.”

“If I were to hand over the Tiger Tally to Bai Qi back then, what would happen?”

Chen Xiaolian’s instinct gave him a feeling that Miao Yan’s words were somewhat dishonest! He quickly followed up with another question.

“You really have a lot of questions. Those who think too much do not get to live long lives,” Miao Yan laughed and walked over. She gave Chen Xiaolian a gentle hug and smiled as she whispered into his ear. “You are an interesting fellow. Perhaps we will be able to meet again in other instance dungeons in the future. En... next time, if you dare take a peek at my breast again, I will beat you up.”

After saying that, Miao Yan took a step backwards and looked at Chen Xiaolian whose face had turned red. Miao Yan waved her hand to him...

A green beam of light descended from the skies and onto Miao Yan’s body. In but moments, she disappeared.

She... she realized that I was looking at her breasts?

Chen Xiaolian felt somewhat guilty.

At that moment however, Soo Soo tugged at him. “Oppa, look!”

Chen Xiaolian turned to gaze in the direction pointed by Soo Soo’s finger...

He became shocked!

On the ground...

To be precise, it was the location where Miao Yan was standing on earlier!

Surprisingly, there was a note marked using one’s feet!

Two English letters.

‘NO’!!

NO?

Chen Xiaolian’s face changed!

“You... you were really lying to me?”

“... yes.”

NO?

This... what is the meaning of this?

In other words, Miao Yan did not lie to me?

The Tiger Tally must really not fall into Bai Qi’s hand?

If the Tiger Tally were to fall into Bai Qi’s hand, what would happen?

Most importantly...

Why did she not say it out using her mouth? Instead, she used her toes to draw out a ‘NO’ word to insinuate to me.

Instantly, a faint sense of unease enveloped Chen Xiaolian’s heart!

He raised his head to look around the large, empty palace hall!

There was only silence all around. For Chen Xiaolian however, there was a sense that some form of existence was closely surrounding him!

...

Shua!

Two beams of green light descended from the skies, first onto Chen Xiaolian, then onto Soo Soo. Instantly, the both of them disappeared from Qin Shi Huang’s main palace building...

...

Chapter 88: Chen Xiaolian's Invitation

Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo walked out from the green light to find themselves within the foot of the mountain of the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang.

Observing their surroundings, they found that it was still in the middle of the dark night.

Chen Xiaolian's personal items and the backpack that he brought in with him into the instance dungeon had been left behind outside the magnet gates of Epang Palace due to the restriction against bringing in metal objects.

There was thus no mobile phone for him to track his position. Thankfully, he had explored the area before entering the instance dungeon. After taking a few moments to examine the surroundings in the night, he judged that they were currently very close to the Mausoleum Area's south gate.

He quickly brought Soo Soo towards the Mausoleum Area's south gate – according to their arrangements, Qiao Qiao and Roddy will be waiting at the south and north gates respectively.

Under the cover of darkness, Chen Xiaolian carried Soo Soo and ran quickly. After reaching the Mausoleum Area's south gate, Chen Xiaolian caught sight of Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao was wearing a sweatshirt as she stood beside a black coloured SUV. The girl with long, black hair stared anxiously at the gate of the Mausoleum Area. Seeing Chen Xiaolian running out while carrying Soo Soo, Qiao Qiao cried out in surprise and quickly ran over.

Chen Xiaolian put down Soo Soo and watched as the little loli flew into Qiao Qiao's arms. He stood there and smiled.

Qiao Qiao kissed Soo Soo's face several times before checking at her from up to bottom. After determining that Soo Soo did not receive any injuries, she let out a sigh of relief.

Straightening herself, Qiao Qiao looked at Chen Xiaolian with a complicated expression and hesitated.

Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile. “Thankfully I did not fail and could bring your little sister out unscathed, I...”

Just as he said those words, Qiao Qiao bit her lips and took a deep breath. She quickly walked before Chen Xiaolian, her body leapt into his arms as her own two arms flew pass Chen Xiaolian’s neck, grabbing onto him.

Chen Xiaolian felt a fragrance wafting into his nose before a pair of gentle and warm lips pressed down on his.

He subconsciously held his breath, his mind blanking out momentarily – before he could relish the feeling, Qiao Qiao had already let go. Her slender eyes looked into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes. “Thank you, Xiaolian! Thank you!”

Qiao Qiao’s eyes turned red.

“Eh... actually, I do not mind you kissing me longer...”

His subconscious reply caused Qiao Qiao to roll up her eyes.

“Unnie!”

Seeing Qiao Qiao kiss Chen Xiaolian, Soo Soo’s small face puffed up to become bun like. She stared with discontent.

“If you kiss Xiaolian oppa again, I will be very angry, unnie!”

Soo Soo squinted her eyes. “Even if it is unnie, I still won’t share Xiaolian oppa with you!”

Qiao Qiao was shocked and she turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. “Soo Soo, she...”

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile and said. “I forgot to mention, the current Soo Soo is the second personality.”

“The second personality?” Qiao Qiao was stunned. Then, she followed up. “What I mean to ask is, what does she mean by share?”

“... little kids like to spout nonsense,” Chen Xiaolian dared not mention what Soo Soo had said regarding the “wait 10 years for me”. He quickly changed the subject. “How long have you been waiting here?”

“Not long,” Qiao Qiao frowned. “It has only been 10 minutes since the instance dungeon started. How did you get out so quickly?”

Chen Xiaolian sighed:

Indeed, the passage of time within an instance dungeon and that of the outside is different. Even though I had been inside the instance dungeon for hours, only several minutes have passed outside...

“Where is Roddy?”

“Roddy have prepared a car at the north gate. Do you want to contact him? There are walkie-talkies in the car.”

Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “There is still Han Bi and the rest who have yet to come out... the instance dungeon have already concluded and the order of transfer out of the instance dungeon will follow the degree of contribution. So, Han Bi and the rest of them should be somewhere behind. Quick, contact Roddy and tell him that we have already come out. Ask him to keep an eye out for Han Bi and the others. If they appear in the north gate, then inform us immediately.”

Qiao Qiao quickly turned to the car to pick up the walkie-talkie and contact Roddy.

Chen Xiaolian stood beside the car and looked at the Mausoleum Area...

Soon, he saw 3 figures quickly walking towards the outer area of the Mausoleum Area.

The ones in front were the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai.

Lun Tai’s movement showed some amount of unsteadiness. However, it was clear that he had already taken some healing substance. The injuries on his body no longer looked so terrible. As for Bei Tai, he propped Lun Tai and they ran together towards the outer area.

Not far behind them was the Black Knights Guild Leader, Alice.

Alice seemed to be in a much better state. However, she maintained a certain distance from the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai.

The three of them caught sight of Chen Xiaolian and were shocked. They stopped in their tracks.

Bei Tai grinned and shouted loudly. "It is you! I knew you won't die so easily! The one who completed the instance dungeon must be you, right?"

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything and gave a faint smile as he looked at the three of them.

Alice's eyes showed traces of wariness and subconsciously took a few steps back. She coldly asked. "Chen Xiaolian? What do you want to do?"

"Could it be that you cannot even say thank you?" Chen Xiaolian softly asked.

"Hmph, this is a cruel game. There have been too many instances of instance dungeon survivors starting a fight outside to snatch equipment," Alice shook her head. "Who knows what you could be thinking of."

"I hold no malicious intent. I just happened to be out before you and was preparing to meet up with my companions. Did any of you see Han Bi? He is the youngster with brush like eyebrows that was with me. And that Xia Xiaolei. He is the youngster we met in Epang Palace."

"... They did not come along with us."

The one who gave the reply was Bei Tai who quickly continued. "We got separated with the little girl you left with us. After that, Han Bi went back to look for her. As for the other little fellow, he too went back to find her. That is why they are not with us."

Lun Tai suddenly spoke out in a heavy voice. "Do you really mean no harm?"

"None," Chen Xiaolian smiled gently and moved to the side. "After all, we have fought together on the same field. I am not that despicable as to turn hostile right after we exit the instance dungeon."

Alice exhaled and stared at Chen Xiaolian. She then spoke in a serious

tone. "Thank you! You are a good person. However, it is difficult for good people to last long in this game."

She quickly moved past Chen Xiaolian. After walking a few steps, she turned around and added. "But, I hope that you can live longer."

"I will remember this blessing of yours," Chen Xiaolian smiled and watched as Alice moved away.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai looked at each other and was about to leave when Chen Xiaolian suddenly turned to them and called out. "Can you two... please wait?"

"What is it?" Bei Tai turned around.

"I have no ill intent," Chen Xiaolian was silent for a moment. Suddenly, a thought flashed through his mind. "I feel very sorry regarding Guild Leader Nangong's death in Epang Palace. But I was wondering, are you two planning to head back to the Nangong Guild?"

Lun Tai hesitated for a moment. Bei Tai on the other hand had already given out a sigh and he turned to Lun Tai. "Old bro, now that the Guild Leader is dead, I fear that our Guild will also... besides, the Deputy Guild Leader, that woman has never been agreeable towards us two brothers. Do we have to go back to look at that woman's face?"

Lun Tai looked straight at Chen Xiaolian. "You are a member of Meteor Rock Guild while Qiu Yun too, have died within the instance dungeon. Could it be you have some other thoughts about it?"

Chen Xiaolian smiled sincerely. "Believe it or not, in this instance dungeon, I am only a temporary member of Meteor Rock Guild. I know almost nothing about this Guild. Only... in the beginning, I thought that Qiu Yun is a good person and believed that it would be good to follow him. However, what happened in the instance dungeon... you already know what happened."

Chen Xiaolian spread both hands outward and moved two steps closer. "Everything I said is the truth. I just want ask the both of you some stuff. If you are not willing, then I will not stop you. If you are, then how about

we move together and continue our discussion while we are on the road?”

Lun Tai exhaled. “You are a good person. When I was injured in the instance dungeon, you took the initiative to wrap up my wounds. In the end, you were also willing to be the decoy... I trust you!”

“I trust you too!” Bei Tai smiled.

At that moment, Qiao Qiao poked her head out from the car. “Xiaolian, I have talked to Roddy. Han Bi has already come out from the north gate. Together with him is that Xia Xiaolei. The both of them are fine.”

Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief and smiled. “Then what are we waiting for? Let us board the car and move out!”

Chapter 89: Guild Leader

The benefit of having a wealthy person like Qiao Qiao as a team member was currently put on display .

The vehicle Qiao Qiao prepared was a Mercedes Benz G55 with a spacious body and high horsepower – when she had went out with Roddy to find a vehicle, they found that the 4S automotive shop did not have any vehicle at the time . This ostentatious female simply threw her money down and drove the vehicle of the 4S shop owner's car away.

On their way back to the city, Qiao Qiao had also reserved comfortable rooms in a high-class hotel. She had also made sure to prepare a great deal of medical supplies, food, clothes, etc.

Chen Xiaolian first headed back to the hotel. After they entered, they began enjoying the food.

In the northwest area of the hotel, Chen Xiaolian unceremoniously ordered a big bowl of steamed mutton. He was so hungry he did not even soak the bun into the mutton soup, Instead, he directly tore one of the bun into half and stuffed it into his mouth .

Lun Tai and Bei Tai beside him were also no different from hungry ghosts. Lun Tai held onto a bowl of beef noodles as his face appeared to be on the verge of going into the bowl. As for Bei Tai, he held onto a family bucket as he munched on. Even the chicken bones were chewed and swallowed down his stomach.

While they were heading here, Chen Xiaolian had managed to gain some information from the exchange between him and the two brothers.

Back then, Qiu Yun had informed him that Nangong's Guild was one with a mass production type of orientation.

Towards this claim, the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai gave a snort!

“Qiu Yun? To think that hypocrite would have the nerve to say something like that!” Lun Tai replied.

Bei Tai was more direct in his reply. “That bastard had already busted

his own guild members to the point where they deserted him. If not for him betraying his team members and sending them to their deaths, why would he not have a single right-hand man in this time's instance dungeon? He even had to come to our Guild Leader Nangong for a cooperation. Hmph!"

Betraying his team members and sending them to their deaths?

Chen Xiaolian tried to ask more about it. According to Lun Tai, he did not know much regarding the incident. Only that he had heard that in the last instance dungeon, Meteor Rock Guild encountered a situation that caused internal conflict to break out. It is said that to complete a certain quest, Qiu Yun lied to his own subordinate team members and sent them to their deaths. As a result, after the instance dungeon ended, Meteor Rock Guild became severely weakened due to the deaths of several of their key members. After the instance dungeon concluded, the surviving guild members left the guild out of rage.

It was as though the current Meteor Rock Guild existed in name only.

After what Qiu Yun did in Epang Palace, Chen Xiaolian was inclined to believe Bei Tai's words.

Moreover... Bei Tai was not a scheming person.

Someone who has the balls to call himself 'Bei Tai' (Spare Tire), how treacherous can someone like this be?

"All I know is that before the instance dungeon had begun, Qiu Yun had killed one of his guild members. According to him, that guild member was plotting to harm him."

Listening to this information by Chen Xiaolian, Lun Tai replied.

Having eaten 3 big bowls of beef noodles, he sneered as he continued eating. "I had heard from Guild Leader Nangong that in the last instance dungeon, Meteor Rock Guild had acquired a very precious treasure. For that treasure, Qiu Yun purposely sacrificed many of his guild members leaving only one who is like a brother to him. However, it seems that these two cannot agree on how to split the spoils. Thus, this led to

conflict again.

Back when Nangong told me that Qiu Yun had brought a team member with him, I was surprised.

As for the plot to harm him, I feel that it is likely due to their disagreement on how to split the spoils.”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly realized an important problem.

“Qiu Yun is dead... that means Meteor Rock Guild no longer have a Guild Leader. Then, what will happen to the guild?

Lun Tai placed down the bowl and chopsticks in his hands and wiped his mouth. He then stared at Chen Xiaolian and laughed. “That would depend on your luck.”

“Why do you say that?”

“If a Guild Leader dies, then the remaining guild members must decide on who to take the position of Guild Leader – generally speaking, this situation would lead to an intense internal struggle. That is because the authority held by the Guild Leader brings many benefits. Among other things, the authority to select and arrange which team members to participate in an instance dungeon alone is very important!

At the same time, there will be a critical restriction placed onto the guild by the system: Among the guild members, there must be a veteran who have experienced 5 instance dungeons. Otherwise, the guild will be forcibly disbanded.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded in understanding: Back then, he had wanted to form his own guild and had Han Bi check up on the requirements imposed by the system. They found that only a veteran who had experienced 5 instance dungeons could have the qualifications to form a guild.

“Naturally, a grace period will be given. Normally, it would be between 24 to 48 hours. As long as the guild could recruit one or more veteran into the guild within the grace period, then the qualification of the guild would remain and it will not be disbanded.”

After saying that, Lun Tai looked at Chen Xiaolian. “You can look at the system interface. In your guild system interface, the position of Guild Leader should have become vacant. Before entering the next instance dungeon, a new Guild Leader must be elected. Additionally, if there is no veteran within the guild, then the name of the guild will turn red and a countdown prompt will appear. It means that before the countdown ends, the guild must find a veteran to join the guild.”

Chen Xiaolian became silent.

He dragged out the guild system interface and looked over it.

Sure enough, the Guild Leader’s position had become vacant.

The 3 words ‘Meteor Rock Guild’ had also turned red and a countdown appeared behind it: 23 hours 11 minutes 26 seconds... the number continued changing.

“I do not know how many people are there left in Meteor Rock Guild,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “I hope that this guild do not get disbanded. I have already spent a considerable number of points to buy the guild’s special equipment. Once this guild gets disbanded, won’t the guild’s special equipment disappear?”

“How about this? You can try to apply for the position of Guild Leader,” Lun Tai explained. “As long as more than half of the remaining guild members support you, then it will be accepted.

The system requirement only states that the Guild Leader who wants to establish a guild must be a veteran that has experienced 5 instance dungeons. However, a Guild Leader who takes over the position or is given the position need not conform to that requirement. So, a Guild Leader that does not establish a guild need not be restricted by the requirement to be a veteran of 5 instance dungeons. Even a newbie can take that spot.

However... that will depend on whether or not there are any other people in this Meteor Rock Guild other than you and this little girl.”

“Might as well give it a try,” Chen Xiaolian looked at Lun Tai. “However, neither me nor Soo Soo are veterans. If we are the only two members left,

then we do not have the qualifications to retain the guild. That would lead to the guild's disbandment. That is why..."

"You are thinking of... inviting us two brothers into your guild?"

Lun Tai smiled – he was different from the simplistic Bei Tai. Lun Tai was clearly smarter.

"Big bro, I feel that is not a bad thing," Bei Tai swallowed another piece of chicken meat. "Boss Nangong is already dead and I really do not wish to go back to look at that Deputy Guild Leader's face! Just looking at her face makes me want to smash it! Let us leave the guild. The way I see it, this Chen Xiaolian fellow is not bad. Also, our Nangong Guild's special equipment have all been used up in this instance dungeon."

Lun Tai thought about it and hesitated. He then glanced at Chen Xiaolian. "Joining the Meteor Rock Guild is not impossible. However... I have a few requirements."

"Do tell."

"First, you must first become the Guild Leader. Within the Meteor Rock Guild, I only trust you."

"Naturally!" Chen Xiaolian quickly replied. "If I cannot become the Guild Leader, I too will leave the guild. I cannot be at ease at leaving my life to a stranger."

"Second, my brother and I will only accept your orders if they are reasonable. Blunt words should be said first. You are after all a rookie Guild Leader; if you are to give out an unreasonable order within an instance dungeon or if it is obvious that you are going to use us brothers as cannon fodder, do not expect us two brothers to obey."

Chen Xiaolian smiled and nodded his head – he was very clear, trust takes time to be built. To hope that others will disregard their emotions and become a subordinate right off the bat was an impossibility. Additionally, the other party were veterans. It was only natural for veterans to have their own brand of pride.

"Thirdly, us two brothers... must have the autonomy in choosing which

instance dungeon to participate in,” Lun Tai carefully said out the last requirement. “While the authority to select team members for an instance dungeon usually rests with the Guild Leader, I want to make a gentlemen’s agreement with you: Under inevitable circumstances, if us two brothers do not want to participate in an instance dungeon, we will not do it even if you order us to! If you forcibly include us into the list of participation, then do not blame us for turning on you after we brothers enter the instance dungeon.”

Chen Xiaolian pondered about it and smiled. “Very well! Agreed!”

...

Chen Xiaolian quickly called out to Soo Soo and the both of them entered the guild system interface.

Within the guild system interface, he found an ‘Applying to be Guild Leader’ option.

This option did not exist when Qiu Yun was still alive.

Chen Xiaolian chose to apply to be Guild Leader.

Soon, a prompt was issued out by the system:

[Your application has acquired the support of one guild member].

Soo Soo smiled at Chen Xiaolian.

Then...

[Excluding the candidates, the number of supporters for you becoming Guild Leader have garnered more than half the support of the guild members. Your application have been accepted!].

Chen Xiaolian’s mind was pleasantly surprised!

Soon, he saw a huge change in the guild system interface!

Firstly was the emergence of a list of names of the guild members!

To Chen Xiaolian’s surprise, besides himself and Kwan Ran Soo (Soo Soo), there was a third name on the guild members list of names.

This name was: Dong Shi (Winter Rock)

[System prompt: Guild member Dong Shi has sent you a message, do you wish to read it now?].

[Dong Shi: Although I do not know who you are, it seems that the fellow Qiu Yun had died. Congratulations to you. Hope you live longer].

Chen Xiaolian was shocked. He subconsciously chose [Reply], as he had wanted to ask the other person something.

However, a system prompt had arrived!

[Guild System prompt: Guild member Dong Shi had already withdrawn from your guild].

With... withdrawn from guild?

He left right after saying those words to me?

Wait...

His name is... Dong Shi (Winter Rock)?

Qiu Yun (Autumn Meteor)... Dong Shi (Winter Rock)...

Meteor Rock Guild?

Dong Shi, raw: ‘冬石’, pinyin: ‘dōng shí’. ‘冬’ (dong) means ‘winter’, ‘石’ (shi) means rock / stone.

1 The word used by author for wealthy is actually ‘tuhao’. It is a derogatory term for people of wealth and influence who likes to flaunt their money. It could also indicate nouveau riche.

2 ‘4S’ shop is a ‘Four In One’ shop in the automotive business. The S includes Sale, Sparepart, Service and Survey.

3 Steamed mutton, a form of snack in China consisting of a bowl of noodles and mutton. Buns are complementary and usually dipped into the soup to soak in the aroma.

Chapter 90: Accompany You!

Chen Xiaolian instinctively realized that this fellow who had sent him a message just before leaving the guild... this person known as Dong Shi was certainly no ordinary character!

The problem however...

Was that the guild name in the system had turned red earlier!

That indicated that Meteor Rock Guild no longer have a veteran of 5 instance dungeons!

However, judging from his name, this fellow known as Dong Shi seemed to be similar to Qiu Yun, an iconic figure in Meteor Rock Guild. Since that was the case...

Dong Shi should have been a veteran of 5 instance dungeons or more, right?

This...

Something just does not feel right about this.

...

... ..

Lun Tai and Bei Tai's entrance to the guild proceeded smoothly.

Next, Qiao Qiao was added.

Not long after, something that Chen Xiaolian did not expect happened.

...

"He, left just like that?"

Chen Xiaolian knitted his brows and looked at Roddy with a complicated expression.

Roddy sat on the sofa. He first picked up a bottle of mineral water and gulped down half its contents before exhaling. He then sneered. "He did not just leave. He said that he is ashamed to meet you and that he feels guilty. So, before reaching the hotel, he requested to get down from the

car and left alone.”

Chen Xiaolian frowned. “What else did he say?”

“He asked you to not go look for him. He is too ashamed to be together with us. You entrusted Soo Soo to him but he ended up losing sight of her.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “But Soo Soo has already been safely brought out. Qiao Qiao should have told you all about these through the walkie-talkie.”

“That was what I told him as well,” Roddy softly said. “But, Han Bi said that he is too ashamed to meet you. According to him, he owes you a lot and meeting you would make him feel guilty. Thus, he did not have the face to come meet up with us.”

Pausing, Roddy looked at Chen Xiaolian solemnly. After hesitating for a moment, Roddy slowly spoke out. “Xiaolian, I have been thinking about saying something. In the end, I believe I should still talk to you about it.”

“What is it?”

“In the beginning, I thought that the Han Bi fellow is not bad. However... on our way back, Xia Xiaolei informed me about what happened to you all in the instance dungeon. Honestly, I feel myself somewhat disliking that Han Bi fellow.”

“... why do you say that?”

“Originally, there was no need for you to enter the instance dungeon. You risked your life to enter the instance dungeon, firstly for Soo Soo and secondly, for Han Bi! Furthermore, in order to save Han Bi back in the train, you nearly died in the hands of other Awakened ones. Saying Han Bi owes you one life would not be that much of an exaggeration would it?”

“ ... ”

“In the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang’s instance dungeon, you willingly became the decoy. But then, what did Han Bi say? He just accepted it?”

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “Anyone would be afraid. He is also

an ordinary person. Besides, that was the result of drawing lots.”

“Do not try to fool me, Xiaolian,” Roddy’s eyes stared into Chen Xiaolian’s as he spoke heavily. “How many years have we known each other? Would I not understand your character? Once Xia Xiaolei told me about what happened during the drawing of lots, I immediately understood. The lot you drew must have the ‘leave’ word. That means the last one for Soo Soo must have the ‘stay’ word! Instead, you swallowed them down. Hmph... I understand you too well!

In order to protect Soo Soo, you can take the initiative to become the decoy.

What about Han Bi? You are his saviour! Why can’t he stay behind as the decoy as a way to repay you saving him?

Is there no need to repay you saving him? Can Han Bi accept all that with a clear conscience? Additionally, you have to sacrifice yourself again for him in the instance dungeon? Hehe!”

“That was a voluntary act on my part,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly.

“Your voluntary act is your own matter! You being noble, great... that is also your own issue! I am talking about Han Bi now! You taking the initiative to sacrifice yourself is one thing! However, how could he just accept it with a clear conscience?” Roddy coldly said. “I have to say this, him being ashamed to meet you should only be natural! If this was someone else, that person too would not have the face to meet you again.”

“He is also an ordinary person. Under those circumstances, becoming fearful and faint-hearted is a normal matter.”

“I did not say he is not normal,” Roddy shook his head. “What I mean to say is... in my opinion, someone like him is not worthy as a bro.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Roddy stared into his eyes and extended his hand to press down onto Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder. “You are someone who gets soft-hearted too easily.”

...

...

In the middle of the night, Chen Xiaolian stood atop the roof as he observed the city.

The view of the flourishing neon lights in the city brought both a sense of beauty and regret. At the very least, his current spot does not permit him to clearly take in the magnificent scenery of the city.

Chen Xiaolian sat on the edge of the roof, his pair of legs dangling down on the outer edge of the big building. High altitude winds blew with strength, causing his hair to dance about in disorder. Chen Xiaolian gulped down the contents of an entire can of beer. Then, he crumpled the can into a clump before tossing it over his head to the back.

Hearing footsteps behind him, he forced out a smile. "You have come?"

"En, I heard the discussion between you and Roddy," Qiao Qiao's gentle voice came from behind him. "I guessed that you would probably not be able to sleep soundly."

"How did you know I would be up on the rooftop?"

"You mentioned before, your wish was to stand on the highest storeyed building with purple coloured top and pee down," Qiao Qiao pursed her lips and smiled. "Even though this place is not the building with purple coloured top, it is still a high-rise building."

"I am just here to drink beer," Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips to the side and smiled.

Qiao Qiao walked to Chen Xiaolian's side and sat down beside him. A pair of slender legs jutted out and dangled on the outside of the big building. Qiao Qiao threw a glance downwards. "So high."

"Are you scared?"

Qiao Qiao squinted her eyes and said nothing.

"I almost forgot, you are not a soft, weak damsel," Chen Xiaolian laughed. Qiao Qiao picked up another can of beer and opened it. In one

breath, she gulped down half its content.

“I do not know how to comfort you. Truth be told... we are not exactly familiar with one another,” Qiao Qiao turned her head to look at Chen Xiaolian and said in a low tone. “I also do not know what it is that I should be doing now. So, I can only sit here beside you and accompany you while you drink beer.”

Chen Xiaolian glanced heavily at Qiao Qiao, his eyes expressing his emotions. “Thank you... truth is, you are the first girl to drink with me.”

“Have you thought about what to do in the future?” Qiao Qiao whispered. “Now, we have a guild and you are the Guild Leader. This time’s instance dungeon is finally over, in the future...”

“That is enough, thinking about future matters right now gives me a headache,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Do you know? My mind have been feeling flustered for a while now. There are so many questions, so many difficulties. However, I dared not think about it. Because, the deeper I go when considering these things, the more I feel as though I am getting lost into madness.”

“For example?”

“For example...” Chen Xiaolian held onto a can of beer and smiled in a state of daze. “For example, I am currently drinking beer. But, I do not even know if I am the one who wants to drink beer, or... did the system’s program arranged for me to drink beer here?”

In the end, what is real? What is false?

When I first learned from the GM about all these things, a huge sense of doubt towards my entire life surfaced – well, I am only 18-years-old. It is probably too early for me to be saying things like my entire life.

Yet, I could not help but think about it... the warmth of my mother’s bosom when I was young, the rough stubble on my father when he kissed me; when I am sick, my mother would trick me into eating medicine by saying it is candy, when I fail my exams, my father would scold me in fury over my inability to be successful... all these emotions, could they all be

false?

Could all of these simply exist as codes written by the program?

Even... today, Roddy had asked me: why do I want to be such a good, kind hearted, saint like person...

What came to my mind was: Is that my character, or... just a setting fixed upon me?

I feel very flustered; I am really, very flustered.

I thought... if everything is false, then what is real?

How does true feelings feel like?"

Qiao Qiao listened quietly. Listening to Chen Xiaolian's words, she said nothing at all. She did not interrupt him either.

She blinked as she gazed at Chen Xiaolian and listened attentively. Traces of tenderness were gradually revealed within her eyes.

After Chen Xiaolian finished his words, Qiao Qiao suddenly took a deep breath and...

She leaned over and hugged Chen Xiaolian's neck tightly.

Chen Xiaolian felt a soft and gentle lip pressing onto his mouth and he stared with widened eyes into Qiao Qiao's eyes.

Those lips... feels... very soft, very fragrant.

The feeling flowing through his lips and the maddening poundings of his heart...

This feeling, was so clear, so... true!

Qiao Qiao released Chen Xiaolian and looked him in the eye. She whispered. "Can you feel it?"

Chen Xiaolian nodded vigorously. "I feel it."

"I do not know how to comfort you. The fact of the matter is, I too am feeling confused. But... if we are to talk about real feelings, all I know is that sitting here with you and looking into your eyes makes me want to

kiss you. And so, I kissed you.

In my opinion, that is real.”

This young girl’s face was blushed, but she said with a firm tone. “In the future, do not carry all the burden by yourself. If you are confused, I will accompany you in your confusion. If you feel difficult, I will accompany you in your difficulties.

So..

Together! All right?”

Looking at this girl’s eyes, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt his heart awash with a surprising feeling of softness and tranquility.

1 Chen Xiaolian had a chat with the GM in Chapter 34.

Chapter 91: Zero

The next morning, Roddy and Xia Xiaolei were sitting in the hotel's dining area while drinking yogurt. Seeing Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao walking side by side into the dining area, the two of them instantly revealed peculiar expressions. Roddy even sent several winks at him.

Chen Xiaolian blushed but Qiao Qiao calmly walked over before Roddy. Looking at Roddy in the eyes, she asked. "Is your skin itching?"

"No, no..." Roddy quickly stopped smiling.

Xia Xiaolei who was not as perceptible was still smiling.

Their actions made Chen Xiaolian feel embarrassed and he frowned. "Are you fellows quite done yet?"

Roddy let out a snigger. "Last night, someone did not return to their room to sleep oh. To think that this brotherly me would worry that his mood might be bad. I brought a bottle of wine and went knocking on his room. How could I have guessed... the room was actually empty."

Chen Xiaolian replied with a serious demeanour. "Last night, Qiao Qiao and I were enjoying the view on the rooftop. After chatting for some time, we felt sleepy and slept on the rooftop. Do not misunderstand."

Roddy smiled. "Taking in the night scenery on the rooftop of a high-rise building while sampling wine, a beauty beside for company, how enviable. You are simply bullying the solitary dogs ."

Qiao Qiao suddenly raised the table's fork and knife. While maintaining a calm expression, she said. "I just happen to love bullying solitary dogs. Roddy, do you have a problem with that?"

Seeing the knife in Qiao Qiao's hand, Roddy gulped. "... No! Big Miss Qiao, please continue bullying any way you like!"

Qiao Qiao stood up and picked up several pieces of sandwiches before leaving. "I am going back to the room to check up on Soo Soo. She has been sleeping all night until now. I am a little worried."

After Qiao Qiao left, Roddy breathed a sigh of relief before patting Chen Xiaolian on his shoulder. "Brother, it seems you have succeeded. Congratulations for making it out of the bitter seas of forever alone."

Chen Xiaolian ignored him and looked at Xia Xiaolei. "Did you get a good sleep last night?"

"Of course," Xia Xiaolei smiled widely. "I have never stayed in such a high class hotel. The room even has a big bathtub with massage bath function. It is simply too pleasant."

"Xiaolei, there is something I want to discuss with you," Chen Xiaolian seriously looked at Xia Xiaolei. "When we had parted ways last time, I did not know the procedures involved in the selection for the instance dungeons. That was why I had advised you to live in the mountains. But now, it would appear that once you have become an Awakened one, you will get sucked into this game. There will no longer be any more peaceful days. Therefore, I was thinking... if you are willing, you could join my guild. Since we are acquainted, at least we will be able to help one another."

"Of course I want to!" Xia Xiaolei slapped down onto the table. The resulting "pa" sound attracted the attention of the other surrounding guests. He then shrank his head and lowered his voice. "I have been wanting to talk to you about this yesterday night. Brother Xiaolian, now that you have a guild, I must join it!"

"Very well, then it is agreed," Chen Xiaolian thought for a moment. "En, if you have no other matters to do in the mountain village, why not follow us back? As of now, I still do not know when the next instance dungeon's information will come. With everyone being together, many issues can be prepared for in advance."

"Even if you don't say that, I would still not want to go back. That suffocating place is too boring," Xia Xiaolei giggled. "I prefer following you all. There is good food and so much fun to be had. Not to mention, I also get to live in such a comfortable place."

Xia Xiaolei's words were said without any other intent and were simply

filled with childish envy.

“By the way, how old are you?”

“I became 16 last month.”

“En,” Chen Xiaolian looked at him and sighed without saying a word.

“Hey, there is also me,” Roddy pointed at his nose.

“You? What about you?” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “You are not even an Awakened.”

“I am your bro,” Roddy said in a dissatisfied voice. “Do not forget, back in the Mausoleum Area, I had helped you by putting on an act .”

“What do you want to do?”

“I want to be like you people,” Roddy said with a straight face. “As a bro, I cannot simply sit by the sides and watch as you all go risk your lives time and again.”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “It is too dangerous. You have a family and a home. It would be best for you to live an ordinary life.”

Roddy was silent for a moment before looking at Chen Xiaolian. “Xiaolian, do you not take me as a bro?”

“It is precisely because I consider you as a bro...”

“Listen to what I have to say first,” Roddy waved his hand.

At that moment, the usual simpleton look on Roddy’s face has been replaced with a stern expression.

“Xiaolian, yesterday I went with Qiao Qiao to find cars. On the way, we talked about many things. That is why I now know about what you all have been through,” Roddy slowly said. “I know that you are doing this for my sake. But... just think, when I found out that all of this, when I found that this world... is actually a son of a bitch game setting. When it turns out that we cannot even verify the veracity of all of these things, real or virtual... just think, could I just continue on with my life as an ordinary person with a clear conscience?”

“Having known all these, could I still live on thoughtlessly and pretend that I am unaware about all of them?”

“In the future, the people that I will meet and the issues that I will face, when I encounter all that, would I not have any thoughts about it? Are those real, or false? Are they things that the program has arranged for me? Or are they the wishes of my real existence?”

“Even someone like me will think about it!”

“I am aware that it is dangerous, of course I am aware about it!”

“Nevertheless, I still want to go with you all and give it a go!”

“At any rate, this layer of paper window has been pierced through. Could it be that I should just watch as you all walk through the gates while I stand here and watch through the window as all of you go fight to the death?”

“I am awake now. There is no rationale for me to continue sleeping – I cannot even fall asleep anymore! Unless you can erase these memories of mine!”

“Otherwise, how would I go on living as an ordinary person with a clear conscience?”

Facing Roddy’s questions, Chen Xiaolian could only remain silent.

The two of them looked at each other in silence for several minutes.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and looked straight at Roddy’s eyes. He solemnly said. “I will admit that what you say is logical. However... I think that this decision should not be made in haste. How about this, I will give you a few days’ time. Think about it properly within these few days, think about your life, think about your parents, your family... a few days later, once you have considered all these, tell me what you decide.”

...

After finishing their breakfast, the three of them went back into the room.

They entered a very large suite. After entering, they saw Qiao Qiao

sitting together with Soo Soo in the living room, watching the television.

Observing the three of them walking into the room, Qiao Qiao quickly made a gesture towards Chen Xiaolian and pointed towards Soo Soo – Chen Xiaolian understood immediately. After last night's sleep, Soo Soo had reverted to her first personality.

Seeing Chen Xiaolian entering through the door, Soo Soo suddenly tossed aside the remote control. She bounced up and ran to Chen Xiaolian's side. She grabbed onto his arm and swayed it. "Xiaolian oppa!"

"You are awake?"

"Yup!" Soo Soo puffed up her face into a bun like shape. "Oppa, I dreamt of many, many things. But, for some unknown reason, I can no longer remember them after waking up. All I know is that you appeared in my dreams."

"Oh?" Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered.

"En, I seem to recall you bringing me to a very dark place where we walked for a long time. En, I also saw some people fighting. I remember... in the end, you do not want me anymore and gave me away to someone else."

After saying that, Soo Soo stared at Chen Xiaolian with wide-opened eyes that held traces of grievance. "Oppa, you would not do that, would you?"

"..." Chen Xiaolian could only smile while remaining speechless.

"That is enough. Soo Soo, do not keep pestering him!" Qiao Qiao went over and pulled Soo Soo away. She looked at Soo Soo and said. "Go wash up! We will pack our things and prepare to return home!"

At that moment, the sound of 2 door knocks could be heard before the door was opened.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai walked in.

"Do you all always break into others room?" Roddy smiled bitterly. "Are all Awakened ones so powerful? Next time, when we are together, it

seems that there would be no need for me to lock the doors when I sleep.”

Lun Tai and Bei Tai’s expressions were serious, not a trace of humour could be seen on them.

Lun Tai held onto today’s newspaper in his hand. “Chen Xiaolian, have you read today’s newspaper?”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “Newspaper? Who still reads those things? If we want to read the news, we will just go online with our mobile phones.”

“... it seems you do not know,” Lun Tai nodded his head and let out a bitter smile. “You really are a rookie Guild Leader. Putting both me and my brother’s life into the hands of a rookie Guild Leader like you, I wonder if it is a blessing or a curse.”

“What happened?” Chen Xiaolian turned serious.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai walked over and sat opposite Chen Xiaolian. Then, they placed the newspaper onto the coffee table and pushed it before Chen Xiaolian.

“Zero... there is news about it.”

“Zero? What is that thing?”

Lun Tai shook his head. “The ‘Zero’ I am referring to is not a thing.”

“Is it a codename for someone?”

“Zero is not a person.”

“Is it...”

Lun Tai answered with an expression of awe. “To be more accurate... ‘Zero’ is a city that does not exist.”

“City? Does not exist?” Chen Xiaolian became intrigued.

Lun Tai glanced at Bei Tai before glancing at the others within the room. He then let out a soft sigh and whispered. “To be even more precise, it is... a city that belongs to the Awakened community.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face became tense. “Continue!”

1 'Solitary dogs' is a Chinese online term for men without girlfriend or wife.

2 In , Roddy put on an act to probe the Awakened ones. DEMACIA!

Chapter 92: The Awakened Community

“This ‘game’ that we have had to go through had existed for a very, very long time. It is such that there is no possible way of tracing it back to its origin. When exactly did it begin, was something that not a single Awakened could clearly tell. Some claimed that it had existed for several years, some several hundred years while some others several thousand years... no one knows the truth. Perhaps... only the most ancient of Awakened ones would know the answer to this.

“This world of ours, its past thousand years of civilization and its past generations, ancient history, myths and legends... all of these are things created by the Development Team from the ‘Players’ world.

“And so, the exact beginning of this ‘game’ in our world is something that none of us knows.

“However, there is this one place within the Awakened ones’ community.

“It is said that a long, long time ago, a group of very old Awakened ones with a certain objective in mind: for example, the unification of all the Awakened ones in this world to fight back against the Players, or perhaps for the sake of exchanging things. At any rate...

“There were some old Awakened ones who came together to build a city.

“Legend has it that they acquired an incredibly miraculous equipment from a certain instance dungeon. What that thing is, I do not know. Is it of the magical type, space type or technological type... I do not know those either.

“At any rate, they utilized that equipment to create a small city within this world. This city is hidden somewhere outside of this world... You can consider the city to be an underground city, or a secret base or a pocket space. None of those is important.

“What is important is that this secret base was named by its founders as ‘Zero’. It meant: If our world is truly a virtual one, then we Awakened

ones must unite to create a real world! That was their primary objective. That was also why they had named this secret base as 'Zero', indicating that everything begins from zero.

"This 'Zero' has always been in existence. How long has it existed? No one knows either.

"At present, there are several top-notch guilds with a permanent residence and a base for their guild within this city. But, there is a limited amount of space available within this secret city of 'Zero'. Additionally, it is not feasible for every Awakened in the world to be based inside.

"Therefore, in order to allow every Awakened ones in the world to enter 'Zero' and share information with other Awakened ones, make transactions, make acquaintances, start discussions, form cooperation...

"'Zero' City would be opened up to this world at irregular intervals for a short period of time.

"Every time it is opened, it will randomly create an entrance gate in this world. This entrance gate does not have a fixed location. Instead, it will be different each time.

"Additionally, every time 'Zero' is opened, it will use certain media within this world such as newspapers to inform all the Awakened ones within this world. It will use certain news to disguise its information and conceal its secret coded message.

"Awakened ones who received this information can enter 'Zero' at the specified time and location."

Hearing all those, Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. "Is it acceptable for me to consider it as... a trade market that is designated to open up? Or a trading spot that opens up at random? A fair? A marketplace?"

"The function of 'Zero' is not simply to allow Awakened ones to make transactions with one another. Naturally, the functions that you mentioned are also available," Lun Tai smiled.

"En, I am interested to know who oversees the general affairs of 'Zero' City? Who decides the rules? And how do they maintain those rules?"

With so many Awakened ones together, won't there occur the act of killing amongst themselves or snatching of equipment? During the trading process, if someone tries to swindle another, how will that situation be fixed?

"Since it is a public area, then there will be a need to lay down the rules and the people to maintain those rules."

"Naturally these exist. The Awakened ones who created 'Zero' laid down the rules early on. Until this day, those order and rules of 'Zero' are still maintained by those top guilds stationed within 'Zero'.

"Everyone from these top guilds with a long history have extraordinary strength... put it this way, they can be considered to be the 'powerful clans' of the Awakened community.

"The order in 'Zero' City is maintained together by several top guilds with permanent residency within the city. They supervise one another, while watching over the stability and maintenance of law and order in the city. At any rate, all actions committed within Zero City must comply with the rules. Not doing so will lead to the consolidated punishment by the top guilds.

"Believe it or not, I have been an Awakened for a few years now. But, I have never heard of anyone who has the balls to create trouble in 'Zero'."

Chen Xiaolian pondered carefully and nodded his head. "If so... then that place can be regarded as a public area or public platform exclusive for Awakened ones.

"This kind of place will certainly be very useful. At least, we will be able to conduct some transactions and glean all sorts of information."

"Naturally, the benefits are plentiful. For example, many of the instance dungeon quests are recurrent. Even if you have never experienced it before, who is to say that there will not be others who have? So, if you received an instance dungeon quest, you can ask around inside 'Zero'. There is the possibility that you will find an Awakened who has experienced that instance dungeon before who is willing to exchange that information to you.

“If one can learn specific information regarding an instance dungeon before entering, you should be able to imagine just how big of an advantage that would bring.”

Chen Xiaolian immediately nodded his head!

If they were aware of the quest and type of monsters within the Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum prior to entering... then, they would be able to avoid taking many detours and at the same time, avoid many dangers – that would be the equivalent of obtaining a walkthrough beforehand !

“Every now and again, Zero will be opened once. Moreover, the time for that is never fixed. Sometimes, there would be 1 month's interval, sometimes 7 to 8 months of interval. There was once where the interval lasted for a whole year and a half before it was opened again. Every time it is opened, the time allowed inside would not be more than 1 week.

“Anyone who is an Awakened would be able to enter during the open period. However, once the open period is over, with the exception of those guilds with the qualifications to permanent residency in ‘Zero’, others will be required to leave.

“It is said that this is to ensure that ‘Zero’ would not be found.”

Roddy pondered and suddenly smiled. “That is not right. This secret city... it has existed for so long. Consider the number of years where Players and Awakened ones have battled against one another. Even if it is a secret city, how can information regarding it not get leaked? Besides... isn't the system supposed to be both omniscient and omnipotent?”

“You can compare it to a virus,” Lun Tai smiled. “It is similar to what would happen if your computer has a virus in it. You realized that it is infected, but your antivirus software may not be able to locate and kill it. The reason being that Zero does not have a fixed location and does not open up according to any set time period. Its opening time is selected at random and at irregular intervals. Only right before it opens will it inform all the Awakened ones... additionally, it is likely that those founders who created the city must have certain special equipment. This equipment would allow them to bypass the system's ‘antivirus software’.

“That is why this city can exist for so many years.”

Chen Xiaolian gestured with his hand. “The place is a good one. I feel that it is necessary for us to experience it... at present, our guild consists mostly of rookies. Going to such a place and getting more information would be a good thing.”

He turned to Lun Tai. “From the looks of it, you have obtained information from the newspaper? Zero is open?”

“The time of its opening is 2 days later,” Lun Tai smiled. “Honestly, I was thinking about how to convince you to go... all other guilds will not miss out on Zero’s opening time! The circle of Awakened ones may not be big, but it is not small either. Many of the Awakened ones who have experienced dangers time and again will have acquired various types of loot. Thus, it may be possible for you to make transactions for many items that you could never even imagine. This opportunity is a rare one, how could we miss out on it?”

Chen Xiaolian inhaled and looked around at Roddy, Xia Xiaolei, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo. They were all looking at him.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian could suddenly feel the weight of the Guild Leader’s responsibilities.

Chen Xiaolian pondered for a moment before nodding his head. “Since that is the case, we will go for a visit! Lun Tai, where is the opening location?”

Lun Tai smiled and pushed the newspaper forward by a little.

On the international financial page, there was news that seemed like a report on an ordinary business summit.

However, after reading it again in detail, Chen Xiaolian discovered the trick.

When connected together, the first word in each sentence of this news report would form the sentence: Awakened ones welcomed to visit zero world.

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes. "This... business summit is the place where Zero will open in this world?"

"Yes."

Everyone in the room remained silent.

From the contents of the newspaper, the business summit will be held at:

Japan, Tokyo.

...

"We did not take our passport and visa with us when we came out, how do we get to Japan? Can we even get on the plane?"

Chen Xiaolian was faced with a problem.

A few hours later though, the answer arrived.

After Qiao Qiao made a call, the rest of them were able to relax in the hotel for a whole day.

In the evening, 2 luxurious limousines arrived at the hotel to pick them up and rush them to the airport.

The limousines drove directly into the airport, moving right into the tarmac. The limousines then stopped right beside the runway...

A 'Gulfstream G650' was resting quietly beside the runway.

A middle-aged man in formal black suit bowed towards Qiao Qiao and slowly said. "Immigration procedures have all been handled. Your father had me inform you to be careful when going away from home."

Qiao Qiao nodded her head once and the man then drove the car away.

After getting off the car, Chen Xiaolian stared at the silver coloured airplane and exhaled. He gave a bitter smile. "Do you have to be so ostentatious..."

Qiao Qiao smirked. "Feeling the pressure?"

"En... somewhat," Chen Xiaolian stroked his nose. "I suddenly

understand. Back then, when you said that you were going to buy up that high-rise with purple peak as a gift for me, you weren't joking! Do I still have the opportunity to regret my decision?"

Qiao Qiao made a face towards him before bouncing her way up to the airplane.

1 Walkthrough is a strategy guide that contain hints or complete solutions to specific games. [Source: Wiki].

Chapter 93: Tokyo

The Gulfstream G650 was in flight.

After waking up from his sleep, Chen Xiaolian could feel the airplane in the midst of landing. Wearing her uniform, the beautiful flight attendant came nearby and used a gentle voice to inform him that the airplane had arrived at its destination.

Chen Xiaolian checked his surroundings. On the other seat, Qiao Qiao's body was curled up into a ball while being covered by a blanket. One of her hand was tightly forming a fist.

Chen Xiaolian smiled. He got up and patted Qiao Qiao on her shoulder.

"Have we arrived?" Qiao Qiao sighed and quickly straightened her body.

"We will arrive at Haneda Airport in 5 minutes time," Chen Xiaolian observed the interior of the passenger compartment to see that the others have already woken up. The two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were drinking beer. Neither of them slept during the trip and were instead showing excitement.

Qiao Qiao yawned and asked. "Did you get some sleep?"

"I slept only for a bit, on and off," Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

"Nervous?"

"It is not exactly all from nervousness. There is also a sense of wonder," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "This is my first time on a private jet. When I first boarded this plane, I do not even know where to place my hands. I am really curious, just how much wealth does your family have?"

Qiao Qiao laughed out and softly replied. "So much money that we do not have to worry about money."

"Do you know? When I saw the first Ironman movie, it became my life's dream to own a private jet."

"Oh? Because you can travel to any place in the world?"

"Nope, he was envious of Ironman's private jet because he could

instruct those beautiful flight attendants to dance the pole dance!”
Roddy’s head leaned over from the back and evilly uttered those words.

Chen Xiaolian laughed and slapped Roddy’s head.

...

After the airplane landed and came to a stop, the passenger compartment opened and a black coloured limousine could be seen waiting. While everyone was getting off the airplane, Xia Xiaolei was still inquisitively touching and pulling everything within the plane.

The airplane captain was a middle-aged man who stood at the doorway. He spoke to her. “We will be resting here for one night. Arrangements have been made to go pick up your father in Brunei tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock. How long will you be staying in Tokyo? If you have the time, you can come with us tomorrow morning. Your father misses you and it so happened that he has one day’s worth of free time.”

Qiao Qiao frowned and coldly replied. “Another time.”

On their way out of the airport after getting on the limousine, Chen Xiaolian realized that Qiao Qiao was being somewhat quiet.

He sat beside Qiao Qiao and patted her on her shoulder. “Not in a good mood? You... your relationship with your father doesn’t seem well.”

“You win some, you lose some. I have so much money that I do not have to worry about money. But, I almost never get to see my father. Just imagine, how would it feel to need an appointment in order to meet your own father?”

Chen Xiaolian was silent for a moment. He then looked at Qiao Qiao and softly replied. “At least you have a father.”

“...” Qiao Qiao quivered and then she whispered out. “I am sorry, I forgot that your family...”

“That is enough,” Chen Xiaolian waved his hand and put on a smiling face. “Where will we be staying tonight? As a super wealthy person, surely you have made the arrangements, right? Allow us to experience the

extravagant lifestyle of the rich.”

Beside her, Soo Soo moved close to Qiao Qiao's ears and whispered with a frown. “Unnie, oppa's family...”

“Shh,” Qiao Qiao smiled and ruffled her mushroom shaped hair. “Do not ask this question, understand?”

Soo Soo puffed up her face and nervously combed her hair. She then put on her bunny shaped earphones. “I get it! Unnie, don't mess up my hair.”

...

As the saying goes: Stick with the wealthy and you will have meat to eat. At present, Chen Xiaolian was experiencing it for himself.

A private jet flew them directly to Japan; when they arrived, a limousine was there to pick them up. The limousine then drove them to one of the most luxurious hotel, Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Even before their limousine came to a halt, several Japanese men in formal black suits had appeared. They stood in a row before the entrance and made a 90-degree bow.

After the doors of the limousine were opened, Chen Xiaolian and the others alighted and walked into the hotel. However, these men in black motionlessly maintained their 90-degrees bowing posture.

There was also a middle-aged man who anxiously followed beside Qiao Qiao, his face filled with modesty and carefulness. He bowed all the way while welcoming every one of them into the hotel.

The hallway had been cleared and not a single person could be seen within the large hotel lobby. They were able to directly enter the hotel and the elevator.

In the deluxe suite, Roddy entered through the door and exclaimed loudly as he threw himself onto the sofa. He flailed both his arms and legs as he rolled around. Then, he got up and smiled. “Big Miss Qiao, I have decided that I will follow you around in the future! This time's trip is just too satisfying!”

Xia Xiaolei who was beside Roddy appeared to want to roll around on the sofa as well. However, he was hesitant.

The two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai exhibited the qualities of veterans, examining the doors to each room right after entering, investigating the windows and checking out the view of the outside. Next, they checked the map of the building and committed each of the emergency exits to memory.

“I want to eat Japanese food!” Roddy jumped up and rushed to Xia Xiaolei’s side. “Let us go, brother! I will bring you to enjoy the best Japanese food available! Haha! Let us go! In order to have space for them, I intentionally not eat anything while on the plane.”

Qiao Qiao looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Do we eat out or do we get them to send the food over?”

Chen Xiaolian was astonished to find that everyone in the room was looking to him. Even Lun Tai and Bei Tai were silently staring at him, awaiting his words.

Chen Xiaolian who was only 18-years-old suddenly felt strange and asked while smiling bitterly. “This... I have to decide?”

“You are the Guild Leader.”

The one who spoke out was Lun Tai.

His tone was one of seriousness and he spoke with a heavy tone. “You are the guild’s Guild Leader. The Guild Leader must decide the guild’s collective action. If you are not used to it, then use this opportunity to do so! Once we enter the instance dungeon, your every decision will involve the life and death of the guild – remember this, the guild members are all counting on you!”

“... I will adapt to it as fast as I can,” Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips – he was still feeling a little loss.

That was only normal considering that he was only an 18-years-old youngster. Additionally, this was not some online game’s Guild Leader position. This was a real risk-taking guild that must stake its life on the

line.

To have to suddenly bear the weight of such a heavy responsibility, Chen Xiaolian was somewhat unable to adapt.

“Then, let us eat out,” Chen Xiaolian replied after thinking about it. “We were all confined within a small space in the airplane. By moving around, everyone will be able to loosen up. Moreover, we could also discuss about tomorrow’s matter while we are having a meal.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian continued with a heavy voice. “Lun Tai, Bei Tai, the both of you are responsible for determining the location for tomorrow’s business summit. Also, familiarize yourself with the surrounding area... get some maps from the hotel staff and make a copy for each of us. Do not put too much faith into mobile communication devices. In the event that the internet goes down, having a map in hand would be the best form of insurance.”

“All right, leave it to us,” Lun Tai nodded his head. He looked at Chen Xiaolian, a trace of a smile appearing in his eyes.

“Qiao Qiao, you are responsible for tomorrow’s transport. En, arrange for a 7-seater car. Don’t get ones that are too flashy or too expensive. Just one of those commercial 7-seater cars will do. For the sake of secrecy, do not get a chauffeur. We will drive it ourselves.”

Qiao Qiao smiled and looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Now you are looking a bit more like a Guild Leader. Just leave it to me.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “Roddy, Xia Xiaolei, the two of you retrieve those walkie-talkies that were prepared when you were waiting outside the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang. Replace the batteries and ensure that they are constantly fully charged. Once again, do not put too much faith in mobile communication devices. In the event that the communication network fails, the walkie-talkies are more dependable. Roddy, you are responsible for teaching Xia Xiaolei how to use the walkie-talkies.”

“OK, leave it to me,” Roddy grinned.

“Everyone will move out on their own. In half an hour’s time, we will convene in the dining area,” Chen Xiaolian smiled.

“What will you be doing?” Qiao Qiao narrowed her eyes and regarded Chen Xiaolian.

“Me? I will be bringing Soo Soo to the dining area to wait for you all while familiarizing myself with this place,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “On the way here, Soo Soo has been saying that she wanted to eat ice cream.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian laughed and pulled Soo Soo with him as he headed out the door.

Before he left, Qiao Qiao noticed that Chen Xiaolian was winking towards her. Qiao Qiao immediately smiled and said. “I will bring you there. Besides, arranging for the car is not that difficult. One phone call will be sufficient to get it done.”

After saying that, she went after them.

After walking out of the room, Qiao Qiao caught up to Chen Xiaolian. She did not say anything and the three of them walked into the elevator. It was only after the elevator doors have closed and they were slowly descending did Qiao Qiao furrow her brows. “Is there anything you want to say to me alone?”

“To be precise, I need to speak to only you and Soo Soo. The three of us need to talk,” Chen Xiaolian’s face became very serious.

...

They went to the 38th floor of the hotel and into the Sushi Sora bar. They walked along the solid granite tiles and arrived before the long dining counter fashioned from cypress wood.

The middle-aged man from earlier seemed to have been waiting at the entrance to the dining area. He immediately moved over to escort them, using Japanese to introduce the place to Qiao Qiao.

Due to the presence of the system, Chen Xiaolian was able to understand what the man was saying. He was merely explaining that this

place sells the most traditional Edo Japanese food.

Additionally, this man was also very observant. Although he has been explaining things to Qiao Qiao along the way, he was also watching for any reactions. He observed that Qiao Qiao was walking beside Chen Xiaolian while Chen Xiaolian's face showed no change in expression, revealing neither joy nor rage. He gradually felt them to be unpredictable and cold sweat trickled down from his forehead drop after drop.

Sitting upon the cypress counter, they found that a serious looking chef was already standing inside. After performing a 90-degrees bow to them, he began to skilfully work on making Japanese food.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at the middle-aged man who was escorting them and Qiao Qiao waved him off.

"What exactly do you want to talk about? Must we do so behind the others backs?" Qiao Qiao asked.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes were focused onto the chef's hands. The chef wielded a sharp knife and sliced out a strip of meat from a fish before cutting the strip into uniform pieces.

Chen Xiaolian seemed lost in thought. Slowly, he spoke.

"The three of us have a common secret. I am aware that there needs to be honesty within a guild, however... this secret is too shocking. Thus, it would be best for us to talk about it when there is no one else around. Roddy and Xia Xiaolei is all right, however... Lun Tai and Bei Tai seemed like good people. But, we don't really know them too well. I have not the desire to harm others, but lacking not in the desire to protect myself is not a bad thing. Besides, this involves the critical secret that could decide the life and death of us three."

Qiao Qiao's face turned solemn and she whispered. "What you mean is..."

"The three of us are not exactly 'Awakened ones'," Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo. He then smiled bitterly. "We are actually not the same with Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Xia Xiaolei."

Chapter 94: Irregularities

“The system that Awakened ones possess has many differences compared to ours.

“The most obvious one is that ours do not have the ‘Exchange System’.”

Chen Xiaolian’s expression was one of exasperation and he sighed. “In the last instance dungeon, I acquired 1,500 points. Conventionally speaking, I should be able to purchase many good items out from the ‘Exchange System’. It is also said that there are many miraculous equipment, medicinal substances and even powerful skills available for exchange within the Exchange System.

“At present however, we are unable to utilize this function.

“Since yesterday, I have been checking up on the system while we were en route here. However, what I discovered was that the 1,500 points that I acquired simply could not be used... there is no place for me to use them! The only place where I can use them would be our guild’s special exchange. Unfortunately, the only special equipment available there is the B Class protective suit.”

“Oppa, I also have points,” Soo Soo widened her eyes and whispered with a soft and sweet voice.

“En,” Chen Xiaolian smiled and patted Soo Soo’s head.

“The second difference is... I met the GM. Or more accurately, the GM came looking for me,” Chen Xiaolian faintly said. “According to him, my existence is one that differs from Awakened ones. Back in my first instance dungeon, a BUG occurred in the system. Due to a miscalculation, I who should have been a dead background character ended up not dying. In the end, I became an existence that the system could not identify. I am no longer an ordinary person and yet not an Awakened... I became an Irregularity.

“This irregularity allowed me to have powers similar to that of Awakened ones and the system.

“However, there is a particular point... if Awakened ones were to die in an instance dungeon, they can be refreshed and resurrected to become normal people in this world. They will simply lose all their memories regarding the Awakened ones world and return to leading a normal life.

“On the other hand, an ‘Irregularity’ like me only have one life. Once I die, there will be no refresh.

“The opportunity to be restored as an ordinary person and continue on with my life does not exist.

“Instead... I will disappear!”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao. “You, Soo Soo... and me, we are the same.”

Qiao Qiao’s face was pale.

“Soo Soo was drawn into my first instance dungeon together with me. Like me, she was supposed to be playing the part of a dead background character.”

Soo Soo looked at Chen Xiaolian with an expression that portrayed both understanding and loss.

Chen Xiaolian continued. “Qiao Qiao, the metallic sphere you obtained was from the two Awakened ones that Soo Soo killed. After obtaining the metallic sphere, you became just like us. You too, do not possess the ‘Exchange’ function in the system.

“To simplify things, we can make a classification. There are currently 3 forms that can enter the game.

“Players, Awakened ones.

“And us... we can be labelled as ‘Irregularities’.

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian suddenly said. “Now, do you still remember what happened before we entered the Mausoleum Area of Qin Shi Huang? We had went looking for Qiu Yun to find him in his room where he killed his companion. Back then, you were asked to clean up the corpse and the washroom.”

Qiao Qiao gritted her teeth. "I remember."

"Then, do you still remember what I asked you not long after? ... Did you find a metallic sphere? Right?"

Qiao Qiao was surprised. "I remember, I did not find any metallic sphere."

"That is exactly it."

Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "Why is it that the two Awakened ones who tried to kidnap Han Bi but were killed by Soo Soo ended up dropping those metallic spheres? Why did the Awakened one killed by Qiu Yun did not drop one?"

"Pausing, Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered. "When I was inside the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang's instance dungeon, I have been keeping my eyes out regarding this matter. In a tomb, we were besieged by Qin terracotta soldiers and two of the Black Knights Guild Leader, Alice's subordinates were killed. However, neither Alice nor Qiu Yun thought about picking up a metallic sphere – it was as though to them, this thought does not even exist!"

"By our understanding, the metallic sphere could be used to continuously create new people like us, 'Irregular Awakened ones'.

"However, Qiu Yun and Alice did not seem to have such thoughts or awareness... perhaps it would be better to say that they do not seem aware that such a thing exists.

"Is this not strange?"

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile.

Then, he continued speaking.

"In the Epang Palace within the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, Guild Leader Nangong was killed in the square area. Back then, the situation was chaotic.

"I then saw something that no one else besides me noticed. Even though this item had rolled all the way to my feet, Han Bi who was beside me did

not notice it.”

While he spoke, Chen Xiaolian extended his right hand and opened his palm.

Surprisingly, there was a metallic sphere on his palm!

“This was dropped after Guild Leader Nangong died.

“Now comes the question!

“Han Bi is an Awakened. Back then, Lun Tai, Bei Tai, Alice, that Miao Yan woman and even the Players from the Wind Slasher Guild were there! There were all either Awakened ones or Players!” Chen Xiaolian gave out a strained smile. “Nevertheless, none of them saw this item! It was as though... their eyes simply could not see that this item exists!”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian’s tone became heavy. “I came to a conclusion: This metallic sphere is something that neither Awakened ones nor Players could see! They do not even know that this item will be dropped if an Awakened or a Player is killed!”

After that, Chen Xiaolian produced another two metallic spheres. Adding them to the one taken out earlier, there were now three metallic spheres, lined up in a row on the table.

“The first one is the one we acquired after killing off the two Awakened ones back then. Qiao Qiao, you used up one of them and I am left with the other one.

“The second one dropped out of Guild Leader Nangong after he was killed in battle. It rolled its way to my feet and was picked up by me.

“The third one dropped out of the Wind Slasher Guild’s Da Vinci after he was killed by Bai Qi. Likewise, Miao Yan was unable to see it. When I went to hug Soo Soo, I had the opportunity to pick it up.

“As of now, I have a total of three metallic spheres.”

Chen Xiaolian continued with a solemn expression. “I thought about it for one whole day and night. Finally, I made several speculations. There may be some special restrictions imposed on the metallic spheres.

“The first is the condition for picking it up: Only ‘Irregularities’ and ordinary people could see and pick up the metallic spheres. Players and Awakened ones cannot see or pick them up. This speculation was based on the time when you, Qiao Qiao were still an ordinary person. You were able to see the metallic spheres that dropped out of the two kidnapping Awakened ones.

“The second is the drop condition: When not within an instance dungeon and in this world, the metallic sphere will only drop if an Irregularity kills an Awakened! The metallic sphere will not drop when Awakened ones kill one another. This speculation was based on the time when Qiu Yun killed his companion. Back then, no metallic sphere dropped out.

“The third is also a drop condition: When inside an instance dungeon, both Players and Awakened ones will drop the metallic spheres regardless of their manner of death.

“In all the cases above, regardless of whether we are in the instance dungeon or not, neither Players nor Awakened ones could see and pick up the dropped metallic spheres. We, Irregularities are the only ones who can.

“In other words, there are 3 restrictions: The first is the condition for picking it up while the other two are drop conditions.

“In any case, we as system Irregularities hold a huge advantage.

“I had been thinking... supposing we have a sufficient number of metallic spheres, we can theoretically exploit this loophole to create an unlimited number of system Irregularities like us.”

Qiao Qiao’s face showed traces of confusion. “This... isn’t this a good thing? I feel that this is beneficial for us.”

“It’s benefit is one thing, but in my opinion... this matter, the more I think about it, the more terrifying it sounds!”

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

“Terrifying?” It was apparent that Qiao Qiao was unable to understand.

“Do you remember, me and Soo Soo are the earliest of these ‘Irregularities’.

“Comparatively speaking, our existence is dependent on ‘hacking’ like methods. We plundered other players’ metallic spheres, which served as their account.

“As for you, Qiao Qiao, we exploited this loophole by plundering someone else’s account to make you into an ‘Irregularity’.

“Don’t you think that this matter highly resembles something that we are all very familiar with?”

“What does it resemble?”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes glinted and he spoke with a heavy and clear tone.

“Virus!”

...

Virus; this word made Qiao Qiao’s expression turn grim.

Chen Xiaolian continued in a calm tone of voice.

“Within the 72 Demons instance dungeon, an unknown system error occurred. In the end, Soo Soo and I became the ‘first generation viruses’.

“If Players and Awakened ones are the normal organisms within this system, then ‘Irregularities’ such as Soo Soo and I are viruses that exists between those two organisms!

“Most importantly, viruses like us can kill either Players or Awakened ones to plunder their metallic sphere, then... produce an unlimited number of ‘Irregularities’ like us!

“See? Killing and devouring of normal organisms, then the production of unlimited replicas of themselves...

“Does this behaviour not resemble that of a virus?”

Qiao Qiao became silent.

Certain amounts of fear and nervousness could clearly be seen within this young girl’s eyes.

After a considerable amount of time has passed, she exhaled deeply and spoke out with great difficulty. “Character wise... that is indeed the case.”

“Character wise, this ability of ours... makes us Irregularities the natural opposite of both Awakened ones and Players!

“By nature, our position is one that brings conflict!

“By killing and devouring them, we can replicate and expand our forces without limit.”

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “That is why I said that our identity as Irregularities, our special characteristic and our abilities... they are a highly important secret!

“I speculate that it would be for the best to not let any Awakened ones or Players find out about all these!

“Otherwise... our existence will arouse the absolute wrath of both Awakened ones and Players!

“Even if we did not take the initiative to go kill or devour the other Awakened ones, our manner of existence alone would likely antagonize the Player and Awakened groups!

“So... presently, the three of us are the only existing Irregularities.

“That makes our secret one that must absolutely be kept.

“That is also why I wanted to talk with just the two of you while deliberately sending away Lun Tai and Bei Tai.

“Although the two brothers are fairly good people... they are still Awakened ones.

“I am not sure if they will view us as enemies or not if they were to find out about our secret.”

Qiao Qiao was silent for a moment before slowly saying. “Your words are reasonable, have not the desire to harm others, lack not the desire to protect oneself.

“Lun Tai and Bei Tai... we should conceal this from them first.”

After saying that, Qiao Qiao frowned. "This secret... especially regarding the difference of our system and that of other Awakened ones, are there any other who knows about it?"

Chen Xiaolian pondered and shook his head. "At present, none. The only worry I have..."

Qiao Qiao's eyes flashed and she struggled to utter out a name:

"Han Bi!"

Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "Back then, Han Bi was together with us, that is why... even though I have never told him about it, I cannot guarantee that I did not reveal anything by accident. There have been a few times where I had Han Bi help me investigate what is available inside the Exchange System. Even though I did not explain it to him, he will probably have his doubts.

"Additionally, there is also Xia Xiaolei. I had asked of him to help me purchase items from the system before."

"These are hidden dangers," Qiao Qiao frowned. "In the case of confidential information, once a leak occurs, clues about it will leak out bit by bit until someone finally pieces together all the pieces of the puzzle.

"If information regarding the difference between our system and others gets leaked out, it would likely attract the attention and concern of some careful individuals. When that happens, the danger of having our secret totally exposed becomes that much higher!

"In Xiaolei's case, he is thankfully still with us. We can control this matter and find ways to conceal it.

"But... Han Bi! He is no longer within our sight!"

Chapter 95: Miao Yan Reappears

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "Han Bi is not someone who will blab. Besides... perhaps we are getting overly worked up."

Qiao Qiao nodded and forced a smile. "Perhaps you are right. However, I think that after we return from Japan, we should go find Han Bi. Find him and... clear it with him. It would be for the best if we could successfully ask him to come into our guild."

Chen Xiaolian furrowed his brows. "Isn't that approach too hard? I also want to find Han Bi, however it is not due me distrusting him."

Qiao Qiao stared blankly for a moment before slowly saying. "My father often recites this quote: Those who dwell in jianghu, have no freedom over themselves. I know that doing this would cause you to feel discomfort. But, you must understand, you are now a Guild Leader. You are responsible for not just your own self. This secret does not concern only you, there is also me and Soo Soo... in the future, it may also concern Roddy."

"Xiaolian, I am aware of the friendship between you and Han Bi. But, me, Soo Soo and Roddy have no such friendship with Han Bi."

"I will be honest, I do not trust him."

"You can say that I am being biased, you can also say that I am being selfish."

"I heard that when you took the initiative to become the decoy in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, he did not stop you."

"That was bad enough as it is."

"You entrusted Soo Soo to him but he ended up losing her on the way."

"I do not care what the reason is, from my perspective, he is not someone I can trust."

Chen Xiaolian felt a stifling feeling in his heart and was silent for a few seconds. "All right, let us not talk about this first. We will decide on this

once we return from Japan.”

At that moment, the chef with a stern expression who was behind the dining counter had completed a dish. He lightly pushed a plate over and bowed before using Japanese to speak out: “Thin cut belly meat of Bluefin tuna, please enjoy!”

Qiao Qiao broke into a smile and handed Chen Xiaolian a pair of chopsticks. “All right, filling our stomachs is more important.”

The chef took out a section of horseradish and personally grated it. He then brought the sauce before them. Chen Xiaolian clipped up a piece of fish meat and dipped it lightly before placing it into his mouth. Suddenly, he felt a fragrance filling his mouth. The meat was fine and smooth, appearing to be devoid of any feeling of greasiness.

After chewing it twice, he swallowed it and smiled as he turned to Qiao Qiao. “Why is it different from the sashimi that I usually eat?”

Qiao Qiao smirked. “You normally only eat salmon. This is Bluefin tuna; additionally, it is also the best part, the belly area. That one slice you just ate is worth as much as a plate of salmon.”

“As expected, finding a wealthy girlfriend has many benefits. Will you be keeping and feeding me?”

That was meant as a joke, but it caused Qiao Qiao to sigh. She slowly said. “I feel that no matter what I do, I will still owe you. Back then, you have saved Soo Soo a number of times. Now, you have taken on all the burden upon yourself. Xiaolian, remember what we spoke about on the roof yesterday. Allow me to carry the burden with you, all right?”

Pausing, Qiao Qiao lowered her voice. “About Han Bi’s matter, I know that you will be worried about it. Let me handle that matter. If there is a need to be wicked, I am willing to accept that responsibility.”

After their conversation reached there, no words came out anymore and silence reigned once more.

Soo Soo who was sitting beside ate a few slices of fish and looked at Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao with widened eyes. She frowned. “Unnie,

what are you talking about? Why do you keep talking about things I do not understand?”

Chen Xiaolian loosened his face and rubbed Soo Soo’s hair. “All right then, we will talk about something else.”

“Can we go to Disney tomorrow?” Soo Soo’s eyes widened and her face became filled with eagerness.

Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile while Qiao Qiao’s gaze softened and she said in a low tone. “Soo Soo, we have something important to do tomorrow. As for going to Disney, let us leave it for another time, all right?”

Disappointment spilled out of Soo Soo’s eyes. However, she did her best to put on a smile. “OK, I understand. I will obediently listen to unnie.”

At that moment in time, Soo Soo’s gaze suddenly drifted towards the entrance of the dining area and she blurted out. “Ah! Qiao Qiao unnie, hurry up and look! That unnie looks like you!”

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao turned around to look.

Two males and one female walked in through the entrance of the dining area.

The two men were Europeans who wore old-fashioned western suit. One of them was old while the other young. They exuded a prudent bearing and the elegance of nobility.

Behind them was a woman dressed in black.

This woman has a refined appearance, a pair of smiling eyes and clear, beautiful looks – In terms of facial features, she was not similar to Qiao Qiao at all.

However, the likeliness that Soo Soo claimed she has was not made without reason.

The young woman sported long, black hair and a lofty expression. Her eyes revealed indifference. As she walked, she exuded an atmosphere that repelled strangers.

This atmosphere held several similarities to Qiao Qiao's back when Chen Xiaolian had first met her.

Qiao Qiao showed no reaction, Chen Xiaolian however showed a huge change in expression when he caught sight of that young woman!

...

"Young Miss, they said that this dining area have been booked for private use."

The older middle-aged European man stood straight, his hair grey, and he emanated a gentle temperament. He bent his head down towards the young woman, bowing as he spoke in a low tone.

His words were spoken using a standard British accent and his movements were performed with ease just like those legendary butlers of nobility.

As for the other younger man, he was clearly a bodyguard. He simply stood by the side in silence, saying nothing. His eyes roved about continuously.

The young woman nodded her head. She swept her gaze through the interior of the dining area and caught sight of Chen Xiaolian and the rest who were seated before the main dining counter.

As her eyes swept through Chen Xiaolian, his heart gave a violent pound! He was however surprised to see that young woman looking at him with an indifferent expression. It was a peculiar and extremely indifferent expression.

Chen Xiaolian could clearly feel it. When she swept her gaze past him, she did not bother to conceal her direct expression. That expression on her was no different from that which one would have when looking at a clump of weed by the road.

She... how could she not recognize me?

Chen Xiaolian was surprised.

Seeing the two men and the young woman turning to leave the dining

area, Chen Xiaolian suddenly let go of the chopsticks in his hand and quickly said in a low tone. "I am going over for a bit!"

He got up and quickly chased after them.

After moving out of the dining area, Chen Xiaolian caught up to the three people at the elevators entrance.

The middle-aged butler saw Chen Xiaolian heading straight towards them and he immediately took a few steps forward. Whether intentionally or not, his body became interposed between Chen Xiaolian and the young woman. He gave Chen Xiaolian a restrained smile.

"Mister, how may I help you?"

Chen Xiaolian's eyes swept past him and he looked at the young woman. The young woman's expression remained cold as she did not even deigned to look at Chen Xiaolian. Instead, she continued watching the moving digits of the elevator.

"Miao Yan! You have come to Japan too?"

Surprisingly, this woman was none other than the one that had fought side by side with Chen Xiaolian within the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang's instance dungeon. She was the mysterious expert who helped him succeed in completing the quest, Miao Yan!

A smile was etched on Chen Xiaolian's face. "Are you also here for..."

He blurted out those words quickly but then closed his mouth subconsciously. The reason being that Chen Xiaolian had realized something was amiss with the current situation.

Miao Yan stood behind the middle-aged butler with a cold expression on her face. She casually turned to regard him once before turning her gaze away. In her eyes, a trace of disgust could clearly be seen.

"Mister, is there a problem?"

The middle-aged man maintained a friendly face, but his eyes have turned cold. "I believe that you must have the wrong person."

"I am not mistaken," Chen Xiaolian stared at Miao Yan and shook his

head decisively. "Please move aside, I need to say a few words to the woman behind you."

The middle-aged butler's face turned cold. At the same time, the bodyguard came over. The bodyguard stopped before Chen Xiaolian and gently pushed him while exercising restraint. "I am sorry, mister. Please stand back."

The middle-aged butler turned around and whispered something to Miao Yan. Miao Yan then glanced at Chen Xiaolian. She shook her head while maintaining her expression of indifference. In fact, it appeared that she had become even more disgusted.

"I am very sorry, mister. According to my lady, she does not recognize you. I think you must have the wrong person. This happens quite often," The butler bowed politely. "It is not good for a gentleman to hastily provoke a woman. Please restrain yourself."

At that moment, the elevator arrived and Miao Yan walked inside first. She did so without even glancing at Chen Xiaolian. The butler then followed behind her while the bodyguard stared at Chen Xiaolian, his face filled with vigilance. The bodyguard stepped backwards one step after another and entered the elevator.

Chen Xiaolian took a few steps forward and watched as the doors to the elevator closed. Miao Yan who was inside casted a glance at Chen Xiaolian, pursing her lips to the side and spoke in a low tone.

Chen Xiaolian could hear it clearly. The word she said was in English: {fool}.

Furthermore, it was said in a standard British accent.

The doors to the elevator were closed and it sped downwards.

Chen Xiaolian stood there, his heart gradually becoming doubtful and shocked.

He was a hundred per cent certain that he was not mistaken!

Even though the word 'fool' that Miao Yan uttered was accompanied by

that strange accent... the voice was remarkably familiar!

It may be possible for someone else to have the same appearance, but if even the voice was the same – how much of a coincidence would that be?

Most importantly, Chen Xiaolian had accidentally glimpsed at the left side of this woman's neck area that was near her collarbone. There, a very small red dot could be seen!

When they were saying farewell within the instance dungeon, Miao Yan had hugged him. At that moment, Chen Xiaolian happened to glimpse that same left side neck area near the collarbone upon Miao Yan and saw that same red dot!

The same looks, the same voice and even the same dot upon her neck!

Considering these 3 factors, Chen Xiaolian believed that if he was actually mistaken, that would mean the system was messing with him!

"What happened?"

Qiao Qiao's voice came from behind him.

Qiao Qiao stood behind him with folded arms, her face revealing a smile that was not a smile. "Xiaolian, could it be you have this kind of habit? Approaching another female before your girlfriend's eyes?"

Qiao Qiao's words were spoken in jest, but the present Chen Xiaolian was unable to laugh.

"Qiao Qiao, do you remember what I told you about me meeting a mysterious female Awakened expert within the last instance dungeon?"

"I remember, the woman's name is Miao Yan," Qiao Qiao narrowed her eyes. "Was that her?"

"Yes, that is her!" Chen Xiaolian replied in a serious manner. "I was wondering if she is also here for Zero's opening. Just now though, she acted as though she does not recognize me at all. Moreover... I have this odd feeling. If someone was pretending, then there would be at least some signs. However, from her expression and especially from her reaction to seeing me... it does not appear that she was faking it. Instead, it seems as

though she really does not recognize me.

Unless she is really that good in acting, otherwise I...”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian became silent and he furrowed his brows.

“If you are not mistaken, then she is probably pretending to not know you. She probably has a reason for that. Perhaps because there are people beside her, making it inconvenient for her to reveal that she recognizes you?” Qiao Qiao frowned.

“Can you check it out?” Chen Xiaolian thought about it. “Since she came here to dine, then it is highly likely that she is staying in this hotel.”

...

It appeared that Qiao Qiao’s father was indeed very powerful.

They returned to the dining area and sat down. Qiao Qiao made a phone call and it was not long before the hotel’s middle-aged Japanese man rushed over to hand them the information.

Qiao Qiao glanced through it for a moment and turned to look at Chen Xiaolian who was sitting beside her.

“Found her. She is indeed staying in this hotel. But, her name is not Miao Yan. Also... she is not a citizen of our country.”

Qiao Qiao gave a bitter smile. “Her background is beyond ordinary. She is a VIP guest in this hotel... she has quite the name and position among the upper class.”

After saying that, she handed the information within her hands to Chen Xiaolian. “This contains information on VIP members of this hotel.”

...

Name: Jane • Brummel • Norman

Gender: Female

Date of birth: September 1, 1994

Country: United Kingdom

As Chen Xiaolian was reading, Qiao Qiao forced out another smile. “Even I have heard of this woman’s name. She is no simple character, she... is a British noble, this generation’s heir to the House of Norman. She also has a hereditary title of Count, making her a Countess.”

“British noble? Countess?” Chen Xiaolian was shocked. “But she is clearly a Chinese.”

“The information provided is not very detailed. But, it does not appear to be wrong,” Qiao Qiao replied softly. “Her identity is not the main problem. The main problem is: why is she pretending to not recognize you?”

Chen Xiaolian’s face suddenly changed. It was as though he had thought of a terrifying possibility!

“Qiao Qiao...” Chen Xiaolian’s face was somewhat stiff. “Perhaps we were wrong...”

“What?”

“In the instance dungeon, she had always been on our side and fought side by side with us. Thus, we were given the impression that she is an Awakened. However... the ones to enter and participate in instance dungeons are not only Awakened ones. There are also...”

Qiao Qiao’s face too, changed. “You mean...”

“Players.”

1 ‘人在江湖，身不由己’, pinyin: ‘rén zài jiānghú, shēn bù yóu jǐ’ is a quote used by Gu Long in his wuxia work, Legend of Chu Liuxiang, which was eventually popularized by subsequent wuxia novels. Considering its wuxia origins, its meaning is likely that people of the pugilistic world have no freedom to act as they like. However, while ‘jianghu’ is translated as ‘pugilistic world’ in most wuxia novels, its meaning have expanded to include non-political circles. Basically, everyday people of the working class that have no influence in the royal or governmental circles can also be considered part of jianghu dwellers with no power over their fates.

Chapter 96: Player Rules

“Maybe, although it is only a maybe, there is one possibility. Our previous assumption was wrong.

“First impressions are the most lasting. Thus, I had never tried to think of it from another perspective, of whether Miao Yan was a Player.

“Now that I think back on it... there were indeed several points of suspicion.

“When I first met her, I came to the opinion that this woman should be a very intelligent one. However, when we were in Epang Palace, she did not know about the famed historical figure, Bai Qi. It appeared as though she knew nothing at all about the history of the Qin Dynasty, just like someone with no knowledge of anything – she does not even know about Epang Palace! She also did not know about the 12 bronze men statues! That knowledge of history is something that even high school students would have!

“That was in complete contrast with her previous display of collectedness and intelligence.”

“Maybe it is because she is a British citizen. That is why she never studied about these historical matters,” Qiao Qiao pointed at the information within her hand.

“There is such a possibility. However, the most important factor is that she does not recognize me!

“Trust me, I have this feeling that she is not just pretending to not know me. Instead... she actually does not recognize me!

“I have experienced this once before. In my first 72 Demons instance dungeon, the Players with whom I have had contact with while inside the game was restored to their identities as passengers of the airplane after the instance dungeon ended. All of them could no longer recognize me!”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “There is only one thing that does not make sense.”

“What is it?”

“The Mausoluem of Qin Shi Huang’s instance dungeon has rules. Awakened ones were supposed to enter before Players. It was only after I had encountered Miao Yan within the instance dungeon that the system prompt came, informing me that Players had arrived. Thus... from a timing perspective, this is not right.”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly got up. “Let us go! Go back!”

“Go back?”

“To find Lun Tai and Bei Tai. I have some questions to ask of them!”

...

Inside the room, Lun Tai, Bei Tai, Roddy and Xia Xiaolei were preparing to move out. Unexpectedly, they saw Chen Xiaolian opening the doors, leading Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo inside.

“Why did you come back?” Roddy whistled. “We were deliberately dawdling around to give you time to be alone.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face was solemn. “Now is not the time to joke around. Roddy, I have something important to discuss with you all.” He turned to Lun Tai and Bei Tai. “Lun Tai, Bei Tai, please be seated. I have some questions that I need to ask of you two veterans.”

Lun Tai and Bei Tai turned to look at each other before nodding.

Everyone was then seated on the sofa within the living room.

“Before this, I have been overlooking this one question. It became the blind spot of my thought process. However, I encountered an incident today which reminded me of it,” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. He then gazed back and forth between Lun Tai and Bei Tai. Finally, his gaze rested upon Lun Tai. “My question pertains to the Players.”

Lun Tai nodded his head. “En, what is it that you do not understand?”

“Their identity,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Perhaps what I know is too one-sided, too little. What I know is that Players enter our world through a method known as ‘arrival’. A comparison to it would be a ‘walk-in’ .

“The several billions of ordinary people within this world becomes something akin to ‘reserved accounts’. Once a Player enters this world, that Player will arrive and walk-in. The Player takes over that ordinary person. This action is also the equivalent of activating an account.

“I need to know, is my understanding of the situation wrong?”

Lun Tai thought about it. “Theoretically speaking, there is nothing wrong.”

“Then, comes the question,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “Using walk-in arrival, a Player enters our world. Then, every time that Player arrives and walk-in, will it be on the same ordinary person? Or would it be a different person?”

“Take Da Vinci as an example. Every time he arrives in this world, would he be using the same body?”

“If it is not the same body, and each arrival would result in a different body, how do they guarantee their outer appearance? Even more so, their gender.

“Could it be that Da Vinci would arrive as a fat man once, then as a skinny person the next? From a man into a woman?”

“I am a little confused.”

Lun Tai laughed and kneaded his temples. He let out a bitter smile. “It seems I too have been careless. I thought that even though you are a rookie, you should know about these common matters. Unexpectedly, your rookie-ness is of that level... Guild Leader, I am not being sarcastic towards you. It is just that I am quite surprised.”

Chen Xiaolian raised an eyebrow and smiled. “I really do not know. Moreover, I had neglected this question earlier. Thus, I wanted to clear it up through you.”

“All right,” Lun Tai replied in a serious manner. “Awakened ones have constantly been confronting Players. Thus, we have always been on the lookout for news and information regarding the Players, which we will then analyse.

“Overall, there are three types of Players.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face became tense!

Lun Tai continued:

“The first type of Players could probably be considered as temporary Players. These are the ‘temporary accounts’ resembling ‘first experience players’. They have the lowest level amongst the Players.

“Every time these Players enter a game, they will arrive and walk-in to a random ordinary person. Then, they will participate in an instance dungeon.

“Simply put, before an instance dungeon opens, the system will automatically direct its attention onto the ordinary people near the instance dungeon’s vicinity. Then, when the instance dungeon begins... Bang! Players arrive and walk-in occurs.

“After the instance dungeon ends, the Players leave the bodies. These bodies will then be refreshed and sent back to go on with their ordinary lives.

“The result of this is that the same Player could possibly end up using a different human shell each time the Player enters an instance dungeon.

“Perhaps when they enter an instance dungeon in Japan, they will use an ordinary Japanese person as a human shell.

“When they go to the United States, they will temporarily use a Caucasian person as a human shell.

“If you recognize these low level Players, you will discover that every time they enter an instance dungeon, their appearance would be different. Perhaps the last time you saw him, he was a Chinese person, next time, he becomes a black person or a Caucasian person. At any rate, they are all random.

“However, these types of Players are considered low-end Players in the Player circle. Regardless of their battle prowess or their level, they are all of the lower levels.

“The second type of Players is known as Mid Class Players.

“These Players are of a higher grade compared to the Low Class Players. Additionally, they have more privileges as well.

“Like Low Class Players, they too will be assigned a temporary human shell by the system whenever the instance dungeon is opened. But, after their arrival, these type of Players can modify the appearance of their own human shell – they have their own unique looks and special settings for their external body appearance.

“After they arrive, it no longer mattered if their human shell was originally tall or short, fat or thin. Once they arrive, that human shell will automatically assume the pre-set appearance determined by the Players.

“For example, a Player may set his external appearance to look like Daniel Wu. Thus, the appearance of the human shell that he uses after arrival does not matter. The human shell’s external looks will automatically be modified to look like Daniel Wu after the Player arrives – even if the human shell’s original appearance is that of Eric Tsang. ”

Hearing that, Roddy smacked his mouth. “Interesting. This feature is quite good. Who does not want their external appearance to look wise and valiant?”

“Naturally,” Lun Tai laughed. “Even when we are playing games, when we are setting the image for our character, we would hope to make it look good. But...

“According to our conjectures, to acquire this privilege to set their image, the Player must pay a corresponding amount of price. Perhaps it is the money of their world, perhaps it is points... at any rate, I do not know what it is.

“As such, this type of Players is more powerful than Low Class Players. These Players are at a higher level.

“However, once the instance dungeon ends or if the Player is killed, then the human shell that the Player was using would be refreshed back to his or her original appearance once they return to this world. Then, the

human shell would continue on with their ordinary lives.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded. “And the third?”

“The third type of Players is known as High Class Players,” Lun Tai’s face turned grim.

He took a deep breath and slowly continued. “This third type of Players is the most critical enemies of us, Awakened ones! They are also the one enemy that pose the biggest threat to us all!

“These Players have super strength, abundance of resources and all of them generally have very high levels. They are exceptionally hard to deal with.

“These Players all have a personal ‘Exclusive Account’ within our world.

“That is to say, there will be one ordinary person within our world who becomes that Player’s exclusive human shell! This human shell is one whose appearance follows the Player’s personal preference and is reserved for that Player alone. Other Players cannot arrive and walk-in to that exclusive human shell.

“High Class Players will arrive into their own exclusive human shell before entering the game to start their adventure.

“This exclusive human shell is similar to that obtained from customized settings. It is something the system made in order to satisfy the demands of certain High Class Players. They are made specifically to meet the requests of the Players. Their external appearance, identity, body size and many other aspects of the ‘Exclusive Account’ will all be customized accordingly.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face changed.

Naturally, he was reminded of Miao Yan!

Lun Tai continued with even more shocking news.

“The first and second types of Players, Low Class Players and Mid Class Players have a restriction on them. They are only able to arrive in our world when an instance dungeon opens and they will move to complete

the game quests. They will not be able to enter our world at normal times.

“However, things are different for High Class Players!

“The reason for that difference is because High Class Players have their own Exclusive Account.

“You can consider it as them having a permanent and exclusive identity within our world.

“There has been an increasing amount of information, which allowed us to speculate and validate that these High Class Players can enter our world even though it is not the time for them to enter an instance dungeon game!

“In other words, they may walk-in and arrive at any given moment!

“Usually, their Exclusive Account will be similar to an NPC, no different from the rest. However, once the Player wishes to, as long as they are ready, then they would be able to enter our world at any time. And that is done by arriving into their own Exclusive Account.”

“Why? What benefits are there in doing so?” Roddy was puzzled.

“It is not necessarily about what benefits it could bring,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “By doing so, the Players will be able to acquire a higher sense of experience and assimilation. When you play a game, surely you do not want it to only be about killings. If you can experience more about this virtual world in detail when entering it, you will feel a higher level of replayability.”

“That is right,” Lun Tai smiled bitterly. “These High Class Players can enter our world at any given time and experience life and all the finer aspects within our world.

“This type of Players is very dangerous as they have an even higher understanding of our world. When fighting against us native residents within the game, they will be smarter and more cunning. They will understand more about our human weaknesses.

“Naturally, there are exceptions, although only a small handful.

“There are a small number of these High Class Players who delved too deep to experience our world and developed certain feelings for this world.

“I had once heard about a High Class Player who fell in love with a female Awakened. This is likely to be a case of him spending too much time in this world. In the end, he invested too much of his own emotions into our world.”

A High Class Player who fell in love with a female Awakened...

Is he talking about Newton?

Chen Xiaolian frowned.

However... listening to Lun Tai's description of these High Class Players who have Exclusive Accounts...

It is sounding more and more like Miao Yan eh.

However, there is still one question I cannot put my thumb on.

Even if Miao Yan is a Player, the system prompt had stated that Players had yet to enter the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. So then, how did Miao Yan enter earlier than the designated time?

This does not make sense.

“The third type of Player is extremely rare. If we are to make a comparison, then they are the big spenders in a game. They are high-end levelled existences equivalent to Great Gods.

“However, there is a certain notion amongst Awakened ones and also a faction dedicated to that notion. They are more extreme and radical than the rest.

“These Awakened ones believe that to make it easier to deal with these High Class Players, they can utilize this loophole.

“That is to say, if they were to encounter a High Class Player they cannot beat in the game, they could wait until the instance dungeon concludes and return to this world. Then, find the Player's 'Exclusive Account' in this world and kill it!

“Exterminate the opponent’s ‘Exclusive Account’ and bar them from arriving.”

“Is that approach possible?” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Too naïve. How could it be possible to get rid of a high-end Player so easily?”

“People who are extreme and radical will always have their own strange ideas. It is not something that common people can understand,” Lun Tai shrugged. “Personally, I have nothing to say about these types of people. So far, the organization that believes in this notion could not seem to come up with any results. It seems that the system will protect these ‘Exclusive Accounts’. Even if you do manage to kill an Exclusive Account, the system could simply refresh out a new Exclusive Account who looks exactly the same.

“Yet for some unknown reason, those extreme radical madmen could go on tirelessly, searching and attempting to kill the Exclusive Accounts within this world. Perhaps... they are doing it out of spite.

“I have had no contact with this radical organization. So, I do not understand this type of Awakened ones.”

Chen Xiaolian was silent for a moment. After pondering for a while, he asked the most important question.

“It is said that once an Awakened dies, he will be refreshed back as an ordinary person with his memories as an Awakened erased. Then, that person will continue with his life as an ordinary NPC. Then...

“Consider Da Vinci who died in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang’s instance dungeon. What happens to him after that? Will his account become dead? Will he no longer appear? Or... will he create a new human shell to enter the instance dungeon again?”

Lun Tai suddenly turned silent!

His face turned exceptionally odd.

Then, he slowly uttered one sentence...

1 A walk-in is a new-age concept of a person whose original soul has

departed his or her body and has been replaced with a new soul, either temporarily or permanently. [Source: Wiki].

2 Daniel Wu and Eric Tsang are both rather famous actors in Hong Kong. One of them is tall and young while the other is short, fat and old.

3 Newton, the Deputy Guild Leader of Wind Slasher Guild was first introduced in Chapter 11. His love affair with an Awakened was mentioned in .

Chapter 97: Human Shell

“I don’t know.”

Don... don’t know?

Even if Lun Tai had given a comparatively more outrageous answer, Chen Xiaolian would not have been so surprised.

However, Lun Tai’s answered turned out to be...

Don’t know?

“How is that possible?”

Chen Xiaolian became speechless.

Qiao Qiao, Roddy and Xia Xiaolei gazed at Lun Tai with looks of surprise.

Lun Tai let out a bitter smile and his face was a mask of inscrutability. However, traces of helplessness could be seen.

He took a deep breath before letting out a long sigh.

“There is no need for you all to feel strange. My big bro really do not know,” Bei Tai shouted out. “In fact, you can go ask any Awakened ones. None of them could answer that question. In the Awakened ones study of the Players and the system, this question had popped up many times. But, there has never been any answer.”

“... why?” Chen Xiaolian was still unable to understand.

Lun Tai furrowed his brows and finally exhaled.

“I will give you an example. There was once a top Awakened guild. En, by top I mean that they have the qualifications for permanent residence within ‘Zero’. This Awakened guild follows a radical philosophy. They believe that they should do their best to execute covert attacks on the High Class Players’ ‘Exclusive Account’.

“This radical guild was devoted to researching Players and the system in an attempt to seek any forms of loophole that could be used to deal

against our enemies.

“Once, they even executed a very risky plan. In a certain instance dungeon, even at the cost of failing the instance dungeon’s quest, they deployed all the key members of their guild with the objective of capturing some Players alive within the instance dungeon! That way, they could use the opportunity to interrogate out some information regarding the Players. Most importantly, they hoped to acquire some information regarding the ‘Upper Plane’.

“And also information on how the ‘real world’ that the Players live in look like.

“Thus, they organized a very high-grade plan of action.”

Capture a Player alive and interrogate out information regarding the ‘Upper Plane’!

This audacious approach caused Chen Xiaolian and the other youngsters to become shocked.

How audacious! How courageous!

“Did they succeed?” Chen Xiaolian quickly asked.

“... should be considered as a success,” Lun Tai’s tone became inscrutable.

“What do you mean ‘should be’?” Qiao Qiao’s eyes became wide-opened.

Lun Tai suddenly revealed a look of unease.

He stood up and strode using big steps towards the windows. Standing before the windows, he observed the bustling city of Tokyo.

Suddenly, he produced a pack of cigarettes from his pockets. As he was retrieving a cigarette stick – Chen Xiaolian noticed that Lun Tai’s hands were shaking!

Lun Tai vigorously inhaled. He coughed out once before turning around.

The expression on his eyes was very strange, as it revealed a faint trace

of terror!

“What happened was: After they were deployed, they successfully captured two Players alive within the instance dungeon. They then continued by interrogating them, then...”

“Then, what happened?”

“Then, their memories stopped there,” Lun Tai replied.

Chen Xiaolian was dumbfounded. “What do you mean... their memories stopped there?”

Lun Tai suddenly displayed traces of distress and gritted his teeth. “It means, in their memories, they only remember up to the point where they began interrogating the captured Players... The memories of what follows all disappeared! Nothing, empty, reformatted, cut off, erased! Any manner of description would be right. At any rate, none of them could recall the interrogation process and its results!

“In the end, these people survived through the instance dungeon and exited the instance dungeon.

“They remember their mission, their battle against the Players, their capture of the Players and them beginning the interrogation.

“However... the following memories, up until how they exited the instance dungeon... this huge portion in the middle is all empty! Their memories disappeared!”

The room suddenly turned silent.

It was a bizarre form of silence, one that brought with it a certain feeling of dread and oppression!

After some time, Chen Xiaolian spoke in a shaking voice. “In other words... system...”

“There may be a certain restriction within the system, a form of rule and monitoring,” Lun Tai replied frostily. “Thus, all information regarding the ‘Upper Plane’ will be erased without leaving a single trace!

“As native residents of this ‘virtual world’, we are not allowed to gain

any information regarding the 'Upper Plane'. Not a single detail is allowed to fall into our hands. No matter how hard we try... even if we do find out about it, our memories will be wiped clean! Refreshed away from our minds!"

"Then, those Players..."

"Hell if I know what happened to them," Lun Tai forced out a smile. "After they die in the game, will they receive any form of punishment, or will their own account be destroyed forever, or would they re-register a new account to enter the game, or would they be punished with some form of mechanism to reduce their level or equipment... we know nothing regarding that!"

Lun Tai stared at Chen Xiaolian and gave a strained smile. "Trust me! A few years back when I had just become an Awakened, I have asked this same question... likewise, there were no Awakened who could provide an answer!

"Furthermore, that plan of action that I mentioned earlier... was not performed only once! I heard that many other organizations and guilds have launched the same type of investigation. In the end... all had... no results!"

No results!

No answer!

Xia Xiaolei who had remained silent all this while suddenly said something unexpected.

"Is there a possibility... if a Player were to die within the game's instance dungeon, then their original body within their real world will also die?"

This speculation caused the room to once again fall into an atmosphere of deathly silence!

After a while, Roddy forced out a smile. "Don't you think that this speculation is too outrageous? What kind of game will impose death upon the Player's real body as a price? That is just... if there is such a kind of

rule, then who would come play this game?"

"It is hard to say," Chen Xiaolian suddenly let out a bitter smile. "We are originally people from 2 different worlds. The extents of our thoughts are different, making it impossible for us to use this world's perception, philosophy and rules to speculate matters that belong to another world."

"I also think that this speculation is too outrageous," Qiao Qiao shook her head.

...

Within a suite room of a big high-rise building.

A black haired woman was lightly curling her hair up. Then, she sat down before a table. Picking up a pen, she wrote down 2 words on the memo before her.

"Miao Yan."

The 2 Chinese characters were written sloppily, as though written by a beginner.

"Strange, this is not the first time that someone calls me that."

The longhaired woman narrowed her pair of smiling eyes. "Miao Yan? To whom does this name belong to?"

The middle-aged butler and the bodyguard walked in. The middle-aged butler bowed and said in a low voice. "In accordance with your request, the itinerary has been arranged. Tomorrow morning, we will head to Sensoji Temple.

"However, the family's proxy for the Asia business branch hopes that you could spare some time to meet with them."

"I said this before, my travel this time is a personal one with no official business arranged into my itinerary."

The black haired woman frowned and shook her head.

At that moment, the bodyguard's face changed!

Looking far away at the top floor of the opposite building, he spied a

strange reflection of light!

“Get down!!!”

The bodyguard shouted out and threw himself onto the black haired woman's body. The momentum pushed her down!

At that same moment, a “bang” sound was heard!

The wall windows within the room was shattered!

A bullet hole appeared on the wall surface! The location of the hole was right behind the chair that the black haired woman was seated upon earlier.

“Sniper!” The bodyguard yelled out loudly before mustering his strength to throw the black haired woman who was on the floor towards the back of a wall to hide.

Bang!

Another gunshot!

The bodyguard's head burst out like a smashed watermelon!

The middle-aged butler leapt towards the windows, attempting to pull the curtains...

At the same time...

Cha!

A sharp arrow flew in from the outside! The arrow pierced into the butler's neck, whose body quivered before falling down on his back!

...

“Hit two subordinates.”

Upon a big building situated opposite, a middle-aged man armed with a sniper rifle bit onto a cigar and sneered. “Retreat! The opportunity is lost! Hurry up and move!”

Beside him, a young man who was armed with a longbow quickly kept aside the longbow and gritted his teeth. “Damn it! Hurry! The opponent

will wake up at any moment!”

...

The black haired woman was lying on the floor, her face filled with panic and her expression distorted...

Suddenly, her pair of eyes was closed. When it was opened again, her expression had turned calm and indifferent!

She quietly crept up from the floor and crept her way to the corner of the wall. Then, she straightened herself.

Her pair of smiling eyes narrowed. The black clothes on her body transformed into a protective skin-tight garment.

She stretched her hand into the air and a long sword appeared within her grasp.

If Chen Xiaolian were here, he would have instantly recognized...

This, this was the real Miao Yan!

“How despicable, I was in the middle of taking a bath! I ended up bumping into these Exclusive Account hunting idiots.”

Miao Yan pursed her lips to the side. She stared at the windows before abruptly moving to the windows opening in one step. She took a deep breath...

...

Bang!

If one were to observe the high-rise building from the outside, one would witness all the windows on one side of the building shattering apart!

A human figure flew forward like a huge bird!

In the middle of the air, she spread out her limbs like a bird and glided through the skies.

Moving in a straight line, she smashed head first through the surface of another big high-rise building that was located several hundred meters

away. She broke through the window walls and headed straight in!

...

The sniper with the cigar heard the sound of the windows shattering from behind and roared out. "She is here! I will obstruct her! You get out of here!"

He discarded the sniper rifle and pulled out a military knife from his waist. Letting out a howl, he rushed forward!

Just as he turned around, a pair of gleaming swords slashed down!

A "ca" sound was heard and his right hand that was wielding the military knife was cut down whole!

Miao Yan's icy countenance appeared close to him.

"This is already the third time. I really hate this practice of yours that disrupts my life, understand?"

The sniper's mouth opened up to release a miserable cry. Miao Yan brought her sword over, sweeping across the sniper's body like a shadow...

With a piercing sound, a head flew up to the air and blood sprayed out in all directions!

After walking out of the room, Miao Yan stood within the corridor and sneered. "One got away? Consider yourself lucky then. I will let you go."

She slowly walked back into the room and observed the decapitated corpse of the sniper.

Then, she walked towards the shattered windows. With one jump, her body was propelled out into the skies before landing into her original room.

She observed the disorderly mess that her room was in. High-altitude winds were blowing in and the newspapers and memos upon the table were blown everywhere. The curtains were fluttering...

There were also 2 corpses on the floor...

Miao Yan frowned. Suddenly, she raised her hand and a particularly unusual watch instantly appeared on her wrist.

“I am Player Miao Yan, Exclusive Account Number XXXXXX, I have encountered a special circumstance. The circumstance encountered is a C Type situation. My coordinates... .. please settle it immediately.”

A few seconds later... something miraculous happened!

The shattered fragments of window glass on the floor suddenly flew back up to the wall windows and automatically bonded together to become a perfectly intact!

The fallen chairs, as well as the strewn newspapers and memo all flew back to the table.

The dead bodyguard's blood and broken bones came together. His head was perfectly restored and his body automatically stood up.

The arrow within the butler's neck disappeared and his blood flowed back into his neck... the wound healed rapidly!

Everything appeared to be moving in reverse!

After that, Miao Yan slowly walked forward and sat back down onto the tableside.

...

At the same time, the sniper's corpse on the opposite building disappeared. No trace of blood remained and the broken window was restored to its normal state.

Miao Yan sat there with the butler standing before her. The butler suddenly opened his eyes. Acting as if the earlier event had not happened at all, he bowed with a smile. “In accordance with your request, the itinerary has been arranged. Tomorrow morning, we will head to Sensoji Temple. However, the family's proxy for the Asia business branch hopes that you could spare some time to meet with them.”

Miao Yan looked at the butler and pondered. “Follow the previous arrangement, do not make any changes.”

The butler froze for a moment. Then, he took two steps back and brought the bodyguard with him as they headed outside. On the way, he closed the door to the room.

Miao Yan stretched her waist and observed the luxurious room. She smiled. "The longer I stay, the more I feel that this world is quite good."

She stood up and stretched her body for a moment. "Should I continue with my bath in here..."

Suddenly, her eyes fell upon the surface of the table!

Atop the table surface was a memo. Surprisingly, there were 2 sloppily written Chinese characters on it.

Miao Yan!!

"Hmm?" Miao Yan was stunned for a moment. Then, her pair of smiling eyes squinted. "Eh... could it be that this Exclusive Account of mine, this human shell has begun to figure something out?"

Chapter 98: Receptionist/Salesperson

In the morning, a commercial vehicle that they arranged for stopped before the hotel.

The seven of them, led by Chen Xiaolian, walked out of the hotel. Lun Tai took the initiative to open the door to the driver's seat and entered.

Before the vehicle moved out, Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the big hotel building for a long time.

"Stop looking," Roddy frowned. "If that woman really is an Awakened, we could potentially meet up with her within 'Zero'. But if she is a Player..."

"At the very least, she did not show any malicious intent in the last instance dungeon," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "We will discuss about it when we reach Zero."

The car moved out from the central area of Tokyo.

Their destination was the Tama municipality.

Lun Tai's driving techniques was extremely outstanding and the car moved in a fast and steady manner.

As the car was entering the central area of Tama, Roddy who sat in the last row of seats suddenly exclaimed out in a loud voice. "Where is the Twin Towers?"

Chen Xiaolian laughed and slapped Roddy's head. "You have been reading too much Conan . That tower is fictional. It does not exist. You are not young anymore, don't be so chuunibyou ."

"Still, even if I do not talk about Conan, I still want to see Misaka Mikoto ."

"Should I bring you to meet the Railgun sister?" Chen Xiaolian breathlessly replied.

"Brother Xiaolian, what is Brother Roddy talking about?" Xia Xiaolei blinked.

“Don’t pay any attention to him. He is a late stage chuunibyou patient,” Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips to the side.

The car stopped at the destination. Observing the big square shaped building before them, they were all momentarily stunned.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai’s expressions though, were one of earnestness. After the car halted, Chen Xiaolian looked at the sign on the big building and asked. “Are you certain... it is here? The grand meeting point for Awakened ones, the mysterious Entrance Gate to Zero City... is here?”

“No mistake about it. The location specified in the newspaper for the business summit is here.”

Although Chen Xiaolian did not expect the arrangement of a high-levelled summit for the big gathering of Awakened ones, this...

Surprisingly, the sign placed beside the big building revealed that this was the headquarters of a large company.

JUKI.

Err... it was involved in the sewing machine business.

Sewing machine?!

The exterior of the entrance to this big building was devoid of bodyguards and anyone could freely access this place. The lobby of the big building was also seemingly empty.

A checkpoint was the only thing set up within the big building.

Two Japanese men in uniforms stood there.

“Please show your invitation card.”

One of them displayed a cold countenance while the other had a smile etched on his face.

Lun Tai thought for a moment before producing and handing over the newspaper. The newspaper had been snipped, leaving only the news section with the hidden message regarding the opening of Zero City.

The uniformed man glanced at it. Without showing any change in his

expression, he pulled open the metal fence. “Enter the left elevator, welcome back.”

...

Seven people entered the elevator, feeling a little cramped. Chen Xiaolian could not help but feel somewhat anxious.

This was especially true for Roddy who looked around and was constantly extending his hand to feel the surface of the elevator. “There does not seem to be anything special. This is just an ordinary Mitsubishi elevator.”

“Did you think it would be a teleportation array that directly transports us to a certain place?” Chen Xiaolian laughed.

“It is not impossible. Perhaps it is some legendary quantum teleportation portal?”

At that moment, the numbers that indicated the building level on the elevator suddenly disappeared!

Everyone was shocked and could only feel the elevator slowly moving upwards before gradually slowing down.

Ding!

After the elevator had stopped, the doors of the elevator slowly opened up. Looking outside, they were surprised to see...

The rooftop!

The elevator could actually access the rooftop directly!

The very moment that the seven of them walked out of the elevator, they received a strong visual impact!

There was a table on the rooftop before them and a gaunt man with a cold expression sat there. His face revealed an odd smile – it was as though there was someone who owed him millions.

That was one thing. However, what caused them to become truly shocked was what stood to their left!

With a height of roughly 5 meters, it was a... metal monster!

It exhibited thick metallic legs and was assuming a humanoid standing posture. As for its metal arms, its small left arm was equipped with a circular metal barrel. It was clear that the barrel was a form of powerful firearm! Its right mechanical arm was wielding a serrated giant sword! There was also a device installed on its shoulder that could discharge blasts!

Upon the chest area of this metal monster was a transparent cockpit. Inside the cockpit was a fellow wearing protective suit and a helmet. Both the person's hands were resting upon the surface of a metal orb...

A sleek body painted in gold, filled with an explosive sense of power. It exuded a shocking military might and killing intent!

"This is... Mech?"

Chen Xiaolian was dumbfounded.

The Mech stood on the left side of the big building's rooftop. Its pair of mechanical eyes flashed with a green light and they continuously swept across the bodies of the seven of them.

Chen Xiaolian noted that the Mech was slightly bending its mechanical legs. The same was true for the right arm and the small left arm – this stance would allow it to attack at any given moment!

...

"Welcome, everyone."

The gaunt man behind the table spoke out with a voice that was as ugly as a broken gong. "I am receptionist No. 00198 for this time's city opening. You are all currently at Zero City's temporary Entrance Gate number X31."

After saying that, his eyes swept over the seven of them before focusing correctly onto Chen Xiaolian. It was as though he could use their standing positions to deduce who their representative was.

"Everyone, there is no need to feel nervous about that fellow's existence.

That is just an I-Model Sentinel Mech, responsible for the security of the Entrance and Exit Gates. I believe there is no need for me to elaborate on it. Considering our identities, we cannot expose our existence to the world. Thus, every time the city opens, there needs to be security. I hope everyone here will not feel any discomfort due to this.”

The fellow claiming to be the receptionist stood up and gestured to the Mech. The Mech took a step back and lowered its hand. However, the green light within its eyes continued sweeping back and forth.

“Very well, now please proceed with the visitor’s registration,” The receptionist said in a languid manner. “If you have entered Zero City before, all you need to do is carry out an identification scan for verification and you will obtain the Entry Permit. If this is your first time coming to Zero City, then you will be required to perform an identity authentication through the teleportation array. After authentication, we will register the information for each of your identities. The next time you come, you will be able to enter smoothly – please trust me, this method is simply for the sake of preventing normal people from accidentally entering our world.”

After saying that, the receptionist lightly clapped his hands.

With a “pa” sound, an equipment similar to the security gate seen in airports suddenly appeared beside him!

Lun Tai smiled and took a step forward. “I am Lun Tai, my Entry Registration Number is UQ965.”

“Bei Tai, Entry Registration Number is QU965.”

The receptionist smiled. “Oh, what rare matching numbers. Please wait a moment...” He raised his wrist.

Chen Xiaolian noted that the receptionist was wearing an unusually shaped watch on his wrist. The surface of the watch instantly released a beam of green light that rapidly swept through Lun Tai and Bei Tai’s bodies.

The receptionist gave a satisfactory smile. “Very good, both your codes

are correct. Welcome back to the two of you.”

Lun Tai nodded his head and pointed to the rest. “These are all my companions. This is their first time in Zero City. Please help them with the registration.”

Chen Xiaolian noted that Roddy had been staring at the I-Model Sentinel Mech and was completely in a daze. Chen Xiaolian lightly nudged him and asked. “Are you back with us yet?”

Both of Roddy’s eyes suddenly sparkled!

“Holy shit! Xiaolian! That is a MECH! A genuine Mech! This thing actually exists! Oh, my Heavens! Kira! Athrun! Shinn Asuka!” This late stage chuunibyou patient was rubbing his palms frantically as he stared fervently at the I-Model Sentinel . “You said that this Zero City has a market place that sells a lot of equipment... I wonder if this Mech could be bought? Is it expensive? Can we buy one up? With this thing, when we enter the instance dungeon, we will definitely kill it big time!”

The receptionist heard his words and the gaunt man’s eyes revealed a trace of disapproval. However, he quickly displayed that ugly smile of his.

“Ah, does this fellow guest have an interest in this I-Model Sentinel Mech? Your desire is not that hard to satisfy within Zero City!

“This I-Model Sentinel Mech is a newly militarized war Mech that was developed last year by Zero City’s Defence Council. It possesses powerful firepower and outstanding defence. Its mobility and various other aspects are also superior. If you install flying equipment on its exterior, then it will have a certain battle capacity within a 3,000 meters altitude. It can reach a maximum flying speed of 280 km per hour. Additionally, it only requires a single pilot to fully control it!”

As he spoke, the receptionist seemed to have instantly transformed into a salesperson. To Chen Xiaolian, the expression on the receptionist’s face at that moment was no different from those who sell insurance.

“... the defence personnel of Zero City have just been recently outfitted with this model of Mechs and there is no plan to sell it to outsiders in the

near future. However, for the sake of satisfying the needs of the many Awakened ones, we have introduced a Civilian version of the I-Model Sentinel Mech. It has almost the same functions as this model and only some minor modifications to its parts. Some of its classified features had to be either emasculated or removed – truth be told, it will not interfere too much with its standard operations.

“If you are interested, after entering Zero City, head to the Double Dragon Avenue. There, find the External Services Centre for the Military Arms Department for more information.

“Right, if you bring up my name, you can get one installation equipment for its exterior as an additional present! My name is Jack.”

... ..

This fellow does not simply resemble a salesperson! This fellow simply IS a salesperson!

However, Roddy, whose chuunibyou disease has flared up was hooked.

Let us face it: Are there any teenagers who do not dream of having their own Mech after watching Gundam?

“This thing... how much is it?”

“Not expensive at all!” The receptionist Jack smiled ear to ear and the face that gave off the impression that everyone in the world owed him money had finally disappeared. Looking at Roddy, his eyes glittered. It was as though he was looking at a humanoid pile of gold. “The civilian edition is divided into 4 editions: Standard Edition, Sports Edition, Deluxe Edition and Tuhao Edition . The price for the Standard Edition is 4,500 points! It is absolutely worth it!”

4,500 points...

Chen Xiaolian instantly rolled his eyes!

The Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang’s instance dungeon that he barely escaped with his life was so hard it could kill even the powerful High Class Player like Da Vinci...

He successfully completed the quest only to acquire 1,500 points!

This Mech's price would require him to go through 3 Mausoleums of Qin Shi Huang!

1 Conan. He is the protagonist of the detective manga and anime series Conan.

2 Chuunibyou. The word used in the raws is 'middle second' while chuunibyou is a Japanese slang that can be loosely translated as 'middle school 2nd year syndrome'. Chuunibyou manifests traits of delusional behaviour, particularly the belief that they possess powers that others do not. It has since evolved to describe delusional behaviour in general.

3 Misaka Mikoto. She is the protagonist of the manga and anime series Toaru Kagaku no Railgun/ A Certain Scientific Railgun. Her nickname is Railgun.

4 Kira Yamato and Athrun Zala are the two protagonist of the anime series Gundam SEED. In its sequel Gundam SEED Destiny, the protagonist role is taken by Shinn Asuka. The theme of the show is giant robots piloted by humans. The robot piloted by Kira, the Gundam, Strike Freedom has a height of 18.88 meters.

5 Tuhao is a derogatory term used by Chinese to label filthy rich people with considerable influence who likes to flaunt their wealth. As mentioned in some earlier chapters, Qiao Qiao is considered a tuhao.

[Source: Wiki].

Chapter 99: Infiltration

Roddy too, was alarmed.

For the past 2 days, they have been listening to Chen Xiaolian, Lun Tai and Bei Tai talk about matters regarding the instance dungeon. Thus, Roddy knew how precious these points were.

Lun Tai laughed out and walked to Roddy's side. Without concealing anything from the receptionist, he laughed out and said. "Do not be fooled. These Mechs are mass produced models. Despite their powerful appearance, a master could cut them apart as one would cut vegetables.

"The best it can do is clear weak mobs.

"Using points to buy these mass produced Mechs is a sheer waste.

"If you really like Mechs, when we enter, I will bring you around to check out the good stuff!"

The receptionist rolled his eyes and his facial expression returned to the original state, one that seemed as though others owed him millions.

This fellow bluntly threw out a stack of forms onto the table. "Those who will be entering Zero City for the first time, please fill in these application forms."

Chen Xiaolian picked up one of the forms and examined it.

It was not very complicated.

Name, age. In addition, there was also guild affiliation. If one was alone, then they can choose 'none' – these were all required. Below that however, were a considerable number of miscellaneous optional fields.

For example, weapons used, tactical position, melee, ranged.

There was even one regarding Exclusive Skills.

Chen Xiaolian remembered the incident in the 72 Demons instance dungeon where he met Sara from the Wind Slasher Guild. From her, he found out that Exclusive Skills were each Players biggest trump card.

One must not casually disclose that information, unless to those deemed either trustworthy or close.

After pondering for a bit, he filled in the required fields. Without filling a single one of the optional fields, he tossed it back onto the table. Qiao Qiao and the rest followed suit, filling in only the required fields before handing in the form.

The receptionist seemed accustomed to this situation. He picked up the forms and gave it a glance before tossing it into his desk.

“All right, your forms will be recorded into the registry. Now, please walk through the teleportation array. When you walk out of the teleportation array, each of you will acquire one identity card that belongs only to you. There is no need to keep the identity card. All you need to do is remember the numbers on it.”

“The next time Zero City opens, you can directly enter without re-registering again.”

Chen Xiaolian was the first to go through the security door like equipment.

A green curtain of light swept over his body – Chen Xiaolian immediately recalled the first time he entered the instance dungeon; back then, he had to go through a green curtain of light as well:

It seems that the founders of this Zero City have capabilities similar to the system.

The others then went through the teleportation array one by one. After each of them walked out of the array, a little card popped out from a card dispenser. Upon the surface of the card was a series of codes.

‘1259W’. Chen Xiaolian looked at his card and pocketed it.

The last to go through the teleportation array gate was Roddy.

Roddy’s face showed anxiousness.

Truth was, Roddy finally made up his mind last night and requested from Chen Xiaolian a metallic sphere.

Chen Xiaolian too, finally agreed to Roddy's request.

Then... Chen Xiaolian transformed Roddy into an 'Irregularity'.

That night, Chen Xiaolian had privately discussed with Roddy, explaining to him all the special characteristics that an Irregularity has.

However, Roddy continued to stand by his decision.

...

The current Roddy was still feeling somewhat nervous. As he walked through the green curtain of light, he feared that the gate would reject him.

However, after walking through the teleportation array gate and obtaining his own identity card number, Roddy breathed a sigh of relief.

"Also, I must further explain another matter. Please observe the restrictions and rules of Zero City.

"First, no personal fights allowed. Any private fights in public areas are a violation of the rules.

"Second, all transactions must be done voluntarily and you must sign the contract designed by Zero City. After successfully signing the contract, the body known as Zero City will protect you. It is illegal to use coercion when selling.

"Third, actions such as thievery, robbery and others of the same are strictly prohibited.

"Fourth, the public areas in Zero City may be accessed freely. However, it is illegal to trespass into private areas.

"Fifth, if there is anything that you do not understand, there is a Consultation Office within the public area which will offer free consultation at any time.

"One final reminder, there are security personnel assigned within Zero City. If a violation of rules occurs, Zero City reserves the following right: Including but not limited to the corporal punishment, incarceration, demand for compensation, permanent exile and other forms of

punishment towards the violators of these rules.

“Well, then. I wish you all a smooth stay in Zero City.”

After saying all that, the receptionist waved his hand impatiently at them.

In an instant, 7 beams of light descended from the skies, enveloping all seven of them!

With a “soo”, the seven of them disappeared from the spot.

...

“I hate it when old-hands bring in newbies,” The receptionist sat back down and sighed. “We do not even have a chance to promote to them. I prefer it when newbies who know nothing come in, how adorable.”

An electronically synthesized voice came out from the Mech beside him. “Jack, stop complaining. You received the assignment to become a receptionist here precisely because you liked to complain so much. Finish your job properly and your punishment will end.”

“Even if the punishment is over, I still do not want to go back to the Intelligence Department. That place is so boring it will drive people crazy. Everyone there is a madman with brain damage.”

The receptionist Jack scowled.

At that moment, the doors of the elevator opened again.

A young man with a very thin body who was carrying a longbow stumbled out!

Upon his body was a protective suit. However, the protective suit was broken! Bloodstains were evident upon his body!

His face was pale and his breathing weak. The moment he stepped out of the elevator, he plopped down onto the ground!

“Shaw (xiào)?”

The receptionist Jack quickly jumped out from his chair. He rushed forward and pulled the longbow man up from the ground. Patting him on

the face, he asked. “Didn’t you go out? Why are you coming in from a temporary Entrance Gate? Why are you not using the Staff Passageway? How did you get hurt? Why is there so much blood?”

The longbow man forced his eyes open and exhaled. “Don’t mention it anymore, mission failed. Rudd (luō dá) is dead! Target woke up, too high levelled. Rudd died while bringing up the rear. It was difficult even for me to escape. But, on the way, I was intercepted by Electronic Guardians. I almost died there!”

“Electronic Guardians? The Development Team sent those monsters inside?” The receptionist Jack’s face changed.

“If I have to guess, this time’s assassination target must be a pinnacle Player with special authority! Only special targets will be granted such strict protection by the Development Team,” Shaw spat out a mouthful of blood. “Son of a bitch, those idiots from the Intelligence Department, I want to kill them! The Electronic Guardians chased me for a whole night and I was unable to return using the Exclusive Passageway. It was not easy for me to slip away from them and I could only use this way. Right, quickly issue a warning. There are Electronic Guardians patrolling the vicinity of the 16th Exclusive Passageway. Immediately enact an emergency shutdown! Otherwise, there would be a risk of exposure!”

The receptionist Jack rose. However, as he turned around, he saw the I-Model Sentinel Mech moving over. The Mech raised its arm, aiming its gun barrel directly at Shaw who was on the ground!

“What are you doing? Are you crazy?” The receptionist’s face changed.

The Mech pilot spoke using the electronically synthesized voice. “I am not crazy! According to security protocols, field staff members who encounter Electronic Guardians must be strictly escorted when they return! Jack, you have never been out in the field. You do not understand how dangerous of an existence those Electronic Guardians are! They possess an extremely powerful infiltrative capability! Shaw, you and I can be considered friends. However, according to protocols for the current situation, it is necessary to monitor you. I hope you understand.”

Shaw lied on the ground and exhaled. He forced out a smile. “I understand, I am not angry... but, can you first give me a damned healing substance? I feel that I am about to bleed to death here. Son of a bitch... the standard medicinal kit that I brought with me has been used up!”

The receptionist Jack laughed and readily produced a Healing Type Beast Blood. He brought it to Shaw’s mouth.

Shaw swallowed it and let out a long sigh. “Thanks Jack. After the quarantine inspection is over, I will buy you beer. With this time’s attendance in fieldwork, I should be able to get a very long vacation. Only, poor Rudd...”

Jack sighed and said nothing.

At that very moment however, something happened!

A change suddenly occurred upon Shaw’s friendly face!

His expression suddenly turned stiff and his pair of eyes turned crimson red in a blink of an eye!

With lightning like speed, his hand shot out to grab the receptionist Jack’s shoulder and he forcefully pulled Jack to his side!

Feeling a strong force pulling him, Jack became alarmed. He turned his head to see the twisted expression on Shaw’s face.

Jack’s heart pounded violently.

Shaw roared out in frenzy!

With a tug, blood showered out! Jack screamed out in misery as Shaw pulled out one of his arms!

Shaw threw away the pulled out arm and sent Jack flying with a kick.

Jack slammed onto the surface of his table. Coughing out blood, he howled. “Mutation!”

The Sentinel Mech made its move!

Several red dots fell upon Shaw’s body and the barrel on the Mech’s left arm instantly rotated at an insane pace!

“Chugchugchug chug!” A burst of intense fire was unleashed!

Shaw who was on the ground immediately leapt up. He then moved to dodge the barrage of fire with lightning like speed!

The Sentinel Mech immediately retreated. After putting a safe amount of distance between them, it launched out a chain of bombs! Next, it suddenly discharged a mass of reddish orange flames from its back!

Its right hand clenched tightly onto a serrated war sword and it charged forward!

A “click” resounded as the blade of the sword viciously descended and the elevator behind Shaw was hacked into two.

Shaw’s figure had dodged over to the side like an octopus. After moving in a circle, it threw itself and clung onto the Sentinel Mech’s body!

Shaw’s body melted at a rapid pace!

A green coloured liquid flowed out from beneath his skin and it rapidly proceeded to corrode the pale gold coloured coating upon the Sentinel Mech! The powerful degree of corrosion was truly shocking!

In but mere seconds, the elbow of the Sentinel Mech’s left arm that had a machine gun installed was torn apart from the corrosion. The left arm fell onto the ground and sparks flew out from the fractured area.

“Damn it!”

The Sentinel Mech pilot viciously cursed out. The pilot then activated an unknown operation, which caused the Mech’s body to emit orange flames!

The flames appeared to be immolating the Mech, completely enveloping it within its fiery reaches.

At the same time, intense electrical currents flashed as it flowed across the surface of the Mech!

Shaw shrieked out in misery and his body bounced off, falling onto the ground. The Sentinel Mech stumbled before immediately dissipating the flames. The serrated sword on its right arm descended and Shaw’s waist

was hacked apart.

Shaw's body above the waist was still alive and he opened his mouth to release a shrill cry as its pair of eyes glinted with a crimson colour.

The blaster installed upon the Sentinel Mech's shoulder locked onto him!

"Wait, wait, he..."

"He is no longer Shaw. He has already been infiltrated by the Electronic Guardian!" The Mech pilot replied coldly.

A "bang" resounded... a bolt of lightning flashed out from the blaster and Shaw's upper half body exploded apart!

The Mech took several steps back before falling with one knee on the ground with a "plop".

"Hurry, raise the alarm," The Sentinel Mech pilot sounded distressed. "My left arm is broken and my central control system has shorted out! Son of a bitch! Hurry up and get reinforcements! We must tightly seal off this Entrance and Exit Gate!"

Jack, raw: '杰克', pinyin: 'jié kè'.

Shaw, raw: '肖', pinyin: 'xiào'.

Rudd, raw: '罗达', pinyin: 'luō dá'.

Chapter 100: Entering Zero City

“This place is...”

They were in a circular plaza with passageways in all four directions, the front, back, left and right. Each of those passageways was metallic bridges.

In other words, this plaza resembled an island surrounded by a flowing river.

The plaza was not very big and was only about the size of a school's sports field.

Observing his surroundings, Chen Xiaolian was somewhat surprised to find others appearing in the plaza. Occasionally, a beam of green light would flash out. After the green pillar of light has dissipated, someone will walk out of it. After identifying their current location, they will then show no hesitation and move towards a bridge heading towards a certain direction.

Occasionally, there will be those who turn towards Chen Xiaolian as he sized up the incoming people. These people would generally reveal a cold attitude and even traces of disdain in their expression.

It was likely that Chen Xiaolian's expression of curiosity had revealed his identity as a rookie.

Beside him, all his companions were present. Lun Tai moved before Chen Xiaolian and smiled. “All right, we have now officially entered Zero.”

Lun Tai gestured at his surroundings and smiled. “This is the central plaza for entering Zero. It differs from other places in that this city's Entrance and Exit Gates are all in the centremost area of the city. The act of entering or leaving this city would require one to go through this place. When we head back, we will be leaving from this place using the teleportation array. All we need is to go receive a teleportation card from the Service Office. With that, we will be able to activate the teleportation

array when we are here and leave this city.

“The city is divided into east, south, west and north districts.

“The East District is private grounds and the place for the official institutions of Zero City. It is also the area used by the top teams with permanent residence qualifications. Although others are not restricted from entering the area, there is nothing to see there. Most of the places inside are designated private grounds. We will only be able to look at their door and buildings, a pointless diversion. The only places that are not off limits are Zero City’s Arbitration Centre and the Security Office. The former is used in the event of a dispute between Awakened ones. Awakened ones can go there to make a complaint and request for arbitration. As for the latter, the name alone should be enough to tip you off. Its function is similar to that of the police.

“The West District is the public trading area where you can find a flea market. All Awakened ones may enter that area. There, transactions of any kind of items would take place regardless if it were equipment, medicinal substances or peculiar props found within instance dungeons. The purchase may be done using points, bartering or even instalments.

“There is a Services Office in the flea market. Before any transaction takes place, both parties must obtain a contract from there. Once both parties reach an agreement regarding the transaction, Zero City will bear witness to the transaction and ensure that the transaction is completed. For example, in the case where instalments are involved, one may request Zero City to be the guarantor. Naturally, collateral such as certain items or others of the sort is required.

“For example, if you want to buy an item from an Awakened and that person only accepts points. Coincidentally, you do not have any points. When that happens, you can use other items that you have and pawn them at the Services Office, thereby taking a loan of a number of points from Zero City to buy the item.

“Naturally, there will be interest! The interest has to be regularly paid. Once you fail to pay, Zero City will confiscate the items you have pawned

away.

“What I spoke of is only one of the possibilities... at any rate, there are a variety of transaction types. After going in, you will gradually get the feel for it.

“The South District is a residential district. Those who come to Zero City for a short duration could find a place to stay there. There are restaurants and hotels there. Zero City’s officials opened most of them while some others are opened by certain guilds. For the most part, the residential district accepts money as payment. It supports the many major currencies used in the outside world. Thus, you can use US Dollars, Euro and RMB here. Obviously, the price will be more expensive.

“However, certain special enjoyment could only be paid for with points.”

Chen Xiaolian was stunned for a moment. “Special enjoyment?”

Roddy who was standing beside exhibited an odd expression. “Could this residential district also have ‘that type’ of services?”

Qiao Qiao immediately threw a glare at him.

“What are you thinking of?” Lun Tai laughed out. “Naturally, those things will not occur. However, there are certain special services and enjoyment that does not accept money from the outside as payment. I won’t go into the specifics. When the time comes, you will understand.”

Pausing, he signed and slowly said. “The North District... is the most attractive place in Zero City.”

“Oh?”

“The North District is the business area. Truthfully, its general function is about the same with the flea market in the West District. But, the North District’s business area is set up by Zero City officials and the top guilds with permanent residence in Zero City.

“If we are to consider the West District’s flea market as consisting of small private businesses, then the North District’s business district consists of the regular army.

“The officials of Zero City have many good items. They have accumulated these goods for years. As for those top guilds, each of them possesses extraordinary strength and have participated in many instance dungeons, allowing them to get their hands on various good items.

“Regardless of quality, quantity or types, the goods there are far superior compared to those brought out by the straggling Awakened ones in the West District.

“Right, Roddy. You can find those Mechs you like in the North District. There is a Military Arms Department there, opened by Zero City officials. From the variety of weapons there, Mechs can be found for sale amongst technological types.”

After finishing his words, Lun Tai looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Where do we head to now?”

Roddy looked at Chen Xiaolian with an eager expression – this fellow must certainly be thinking of running off to that Military Arms Department.

Chen Xiaolian pondered about it before shaking his head. “We have only just arrived here; it would be for the best that we familiarize ourselves with the environment. En, I doubt we will only stay here for a day. So, let us first head to the residential district and find a place to stay. Once we have that covered, we will discuss about the others.”

All of them agreed with Chen Xiaolian’s decision. Thus, all seven of them moved out in the south direction as they head towards the residential district.

As they walked through the metallic bridge to the south of the central plaza, they could observe the riverbank. There were actually places resembling outdoor cafes.

Some Awakened ones were sitting under patio umbrellas as they leisurely sipped their beverages.

Sounds of merriment rose up from the riverbank. Chen Xiaolian was surprised to see a man-made beach upon the riverbank, complete with

artificially created waves. Males and females wearing swimsuits and bikinis were swimming and playing there.

.“This... this is simply a resort,” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes bulged wide and he raised his head to examine the skies. The sun was shining high in the clear blue skies. “Right, we can see the skies here... this city is probably not situated underground, right? I had originally thought that it would be an underground city like the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang.”

“... I do not know,” Lun Tai shook his head. “Zero City’s location is top secret. Every time I come, the skies would be different. Sometime, it would be night, sometimes it would be day, sometimes you can see the skies and sometimes you can see only nothingness... Hell if I know what is going on. Perhaps the sun and sky are artificially created.”

“Why are those fellows vacationing here?” Roddy stared at a bikini wearing big-breasted woman who was on the beach. He stared for quite some time before retracting his gaze.

“Because this place is safe,” Lun Tai pondered for a while before forcing out a smile. “First: when you are here, you will not encounter those Awakened ones who... perhaps you are not aware of this. The relationship between Awakened ones in the outside world is not too good. A meeting with unacquainted Awakened ones could potentially lead to a battle for life. Surely you understand the concept of killing others for their treasures and equipment.”

Chen Xiaolian immediately recalled the incident outside the waterfall before he entered the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. He nodded his head.

“Zero City is very safe. Furthermore, it is only here that Awakened ones could truly experience a certain... sense of realism. That is because everyone here is Awakened ones. Here, everyone can coexist peacefully.

“There is another important factor that you probably do not know of. Look at this artificially made beach. There is a special nickname for this place in Zero City.”

“Special nickname? What is it?”

“Sea of Love,” Lun Tai blushed as he smiled.

“Sea... of Love?” In that instant, Chen Xiaolian and the other youngsters were all left dumbfounded.

“Truth be told, most Awakened ones are very lonely,” Lun Tai sighed. He stared at the artificial beach and continued in a low voice. “After becoming an Awakened, many of them will feel a myriad of emotions from lost, hesitant, irrational and others. Additionally... after you become an Awakened, after you understand that this world and yourself... and so many others could potentially be nothing more but a creation of a higher Upper Plane world, a virtual object... would you still have the courage to pursue those so-called feelings?

“At that moment in time, if you were still single... will you be willing to find an ordinary other half?

“When facing an ordinary person, regardless if you are going out, meeting up or going to the bed together...

“Your heart will feel uncomfortable. You will always wonder: Is all of this real?

“From time to time, you will be required to enter the instance dungeon to commit acts of killings and could potentially die in any of them... under such circumstances, loving someone from the ordinary world would be very difficult.

“I heard from a friend that after becoming an Awakened, the act of going to bed with an ordinary woman made him feel as though he was doing it with an inflatable doll.

“These unshakeable feelings of internal anguish and loneliness would shroud the hearts of many Awakened ones.

“Under these circumstances, Awakened ones could only somewhat distract themselves from the sense of loss and confusion by being with other Awakened ones like them. Only then could they somehow avoid the unbearable illusion of reality and pretence.

“Awakened ones are lonely beings, that loneliness becomes even more

pronounced for those who do not have their other half.

“That is why Awakened ones tend to only accept other Awakened ones as their other half – this Zero City is the safest place to be. Thus, Awakened couples would often be acquainted with one another thanks to this place.

“The cafes along this southern residential district riverbank and that artificial beach are the best place for Awakened ones to meet and get to know one another.”

After saying that, Lun Tai looked at Chen Xiaolian before turning to Roddy. “Guild Leader has no such need. But, Roddy and Xiaolei, if you two are fine with it, then tonight I will bring you two for a cup of wine in the riverbank’s pub. Perhaps, you will have a memorable encounter there.”

Roddy’s eyes suddenly flashed out! He discarded the thoughts about Mechs to the back of his mind!

“Yes! Yes! Why don’t we go now?”

...

They walked down the main road of the South District. The road was extremely broad and yet, there were no vehicles on it at all, as the road only has pedestrian streets upon it.

The street area was highly standard and clean, devoid of any greenery on both sides. It was overflowing with a metallic science fiction feel.

The buildings here were not as bizarre as what they had imagined. Each of the buildings was either square or round in shape, showing not much difference when compared to the buildings of the outside world.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai who have been here before immediately brought them over to a hotel that they were familiar with.

The hotel was located within a bustling street in the South District – as for the street, it was not much different compared to the commercial streets of the outside world, where dining places and bars await.

The name of this hotel was ‘Tourist Lodge’ and it was considerably

impressive. It sported transparent glass walls for its doors. Entering, they found themselves within a circular shaped public area. There, on the side of the main doors, was a screen wall.

Upon the surface of the screen were two lines of what appeared to be moving text, written using various different languages.

“This hotel is under the protection of Zero City officials and the Rodriar (luō dé lǐ yǎ) Guild.

“Reception in this place is handled by the cooperating Rodriar Guild.”

Rodriar, raw: ‘罗德里亚’, pinyin: ‘luō dé lǐ yǎ’.

Chapter 101: Vigilance

Rodriar?

Chen Xiaolian smiled. "This guild must be very powerful."

"It is one of the guilds with permanent residence in Zero City," Lun Tai pursed his lips to the side. "They are very trustworthy and they never bully other normal Awakened ones. Word is they are very good. They opened this place. We stayed here during the few times we have been to Zero City."

After saying that, Lun Tai walked to the counter. "We need a few rooms."

There was no staff member behind the counter. Soon however, a fully automated projection appeared. It was the projection of a sweet looking female staff member decked in hotel uniform. She smiled and spoke in a sweet and gentle voice. "May I ask if you have any specific requirements?"

"It would be best if we could get a suite, one that could accommodate up to seven people."

"All right, please wait a moment."

The projected figure smiled sweetly. Next, she extended her finger out to tap the air several times and a translucent projected screen appeared in the air.

The sight transfixed Roddy!

"Holy shit, this... the science fictional feeling of this place is too overwhelming!" This youngster stared at the uniformed beauty and suddenly whispered out a question to Bei Tai who was beside him. "Bro... is the attendant here... also an Awakened? She looks so beautiful and gentle."

"How is that possible?" Bei Tai rolled his eyes. "At present, there are only a small number of Awakened ones. How could they be here as an attendant? You are thinking too much into it. These are all virtual projections from the computer. You may consider them as artificial

intelligence from computers.”

“... Such a beautiful sister is actually just an artificial intelligence,” Roddy looked at the uniformed beauty with a trace of regret. “What a pity!”

Roddy bumped into Chen Xiaolian and realized that Chen Xiaolian was also in a daze. “To think that you would dare get dumbstruck by a beauty. Are you not afraid of Big Miss Qiao’s tantrum?”

Qiao Qiao pursed her lips to the side as she stared at Roddy. Then, she turned to Chen Xiaolian with a gentle face. “Xiaolian is not as easily distracted like you.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “Truth is... I feel somewhat inferior.”

“Inferior?”

“Indeed, inferior,” Chen Xiaolian pointed towards the magnificent looking hotel and the highly sci-fi virtual projection of the beautiful staff member. He smiled bitterly. “We are both out here trying to survive. That Rodriar Guild is a guild. We too, are a guild! And yet, look at how they are surviving compared to us...”

“When will we be able to occupy a place in this Zero City? When will we be able to participate in business like this? When will we be able to even produce such a technologically advanced artificial intelligence...”

“Compared to others, the current we are but a bunch of travelling performers.”

Bei Tai who was standing to the side laughed out and patted Chen Xiaolian on his shoulder. “I say, little Guild Leader. Truthfully, my brother had also said those kinds of words the first time we came here!”

Lun Tai shook his head. “Back then, I was still green. The longer you get to survive in this world, the more your heart will know fear. A legendary guild like the Rodriar Guild is not something that we could match up to. We can only look on with envy at them. Take the qualification for permanent residence in Zero City for example. I heard that there has been no new guild capable of earning that in nearly a hundred years.”

“A hundred years? Are you saying that this place has existed for a hundred years?” Roddy stared with bulging eyes.

“This place has existed for far longer than a hundred years. However, how far back does it date is something that no one knows. Perhaps, only the old monsters from Zero City would know,” Bei Tai laughed.

...

They were given a grand suite the size of five bedrooms.

The expense could be paid using money and the one to foot the bill was naturally the richest person in the guild, the affluent Big Miss Qiao.

The room was astonishingly expensive with a daily price of 20,000... US dollars!

“Will there be a credit card record? Are the people from Zero City not afraid that someone will trace the credit card records to find this place?” Qiao Qiao curiously asked after using her card.

“Of course not. I don’t know the specifics of it either, however since they dare to do something like this, that meant they have the means to handle this matter.”

“What I am curious about is... what would they want money for?” Chen Xiaolian suddenly asked with a low tone. “Money... may be useful for ordinary people. However, for high-levelled Awakened ones and those legendary top guilds... what use is money for them? Just look at the virtual projection system and that artificial intelligence. If they were to take that to the outside, any country would scramble to buy it.

“Why would they still build a hotel to earn money?”

“System restrictions. Items that have a higher level of technology or magic compared to the standard of the outside world are prohibited from appearing in the outside world. That will disrupt the balance of the system’s settings. That is why...” Lun Tai smiled. “Even though they have a great deal of ability to make money, it is not as easy as you might have imagined.”

After entering the suite, they took a slight rest. The suite did not have anything that was shocking to it and was only a hotel room with more luxurious furnishings.

“The counter work may be left to the virtual projection... but in the hoteling industry, attendants, cleaners and chefs in the dining area could not possibly be left to virtual projections, right?” Roddy could not help himself and asked out.

“Fool, they even have Mechs here. Could they not have humanoid robots?” Qiao Qiao rapped Roddy’s head.

“All right, stop throwing a ruckus! Come over and we’ll start our discussion,” Chen Xiaolian snapped his fingers and all seven of them gathered.

Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo stood to Chen Xiaolian’s left side and the others formed a circle.

“We will be heading out in a moment. Since this place is safe, I suggest that we move separately. Everyone have their own place that they want to go. Thus, there is no need for us to move together for now.”

Chen Xiaolian voiced out his suggestion.

Lun Tai thought about it. “Not a bad idea... this place is very safe. No dangers will appear here. This aspect of Zero City remained unshaken even until today. We can enjoy ourselves normally and shop around. As long as we do not stir up trouble recklessly, everything will be all right.

“It so happened that I too, have some things that I want to purchase.”

Chen Xiaolian did not question Lun Tai what was it that he wanted to buy – after all, their guild was newly formed. From a fundamental perspective, they were unable to trust to one another completely and would have some reservation towards one another.

“Roddy, where do you want to go?”

“Naturally, I want to go see the Mechs!” Roddy immediately shouted out.

Lun Tai laughed. “In that case, Roddy will be following me. I am going to the North District’s business area. I can bring him to the Military Arms Department while I am on the way.”

Xia Xiaolei pondered. “I also want to follow Guild Leader...”

Roddy purposely nudged him and sent him winks while laughing. “Fool, their family of three are going shopping. If you go, you will end up disturbing them.”

After saying that, Roddy made a weird facial expression. Xia Xiaolei immediately understood; Qiao Qiao on the other hand threw a sharp stare at Roddy.

“Then it’s settled. Roddy, Xia Xiaolei, you two will follow Lun Tai and Bei Tai to the business district,” Chen Xiaolian said with an indifferent voice. “I want to go have a look at the flea market. Soo Soo and Qiao Qiao will be following me. It is currently... 3 pm. We will meet up at the outdoor cafes by the riverbank that we saw earlier. Lun Tai, will 3 hours be enough for what you intend to do?”

“It is enough,” Lun Tai nodded his head. After pondering for a while, he spoke to Chen Xiaolian. “Guild Leader, I won’t ask you what you want to buy at the flea market. However, I want to remind you. Zero City prohibits the acts of coercive selling, but the flea market plays host to both dragons and snakes. There will not be any acts of robbery or theft... however, you will still need to be wary of deceptive people. Some cunning Awakened ones will pass themselves off as good people and are very crafty. After signing the transaction contract, you will end up realizing that you have paid a huge price for a bunch of trash.

“I would suggest that you refrain yourself from buying anything on your first day. Walk around and check things out first. If you want to buy something, it would be best for you to be clear on the situation.

“Finally, there is a protective mechanism within the flea market that will protect the identity of both buyers and sellers. Before entering the flea market, first go to the Services Office to obtain a set of identity concealing equipment.

“That way, you will not become exposed. If you manage to get your hands on something good here, and others set their sights on you, even if they dare not act against you here, they can note down your identity and looks. Then, when you go outside... who knows what would happen!”

“Very well! I will take note. Thanks!”

...

“Secured!”

“Secured!”

“Secured!”

Several I-Model Sentinel Mechs were standing on the rooftop of the big building. One of them was still holding on to a searchlight like instrument to conduct an internal scan on the sliced elevator door.

“No deep infiltration detected.”

A middle-aged man in white clothes stood by the table wreckage.

The receptionist Jack was lying within a transparent glass container. His torn out limb was already reconnected.

The middle-aged man in white regarded Jack and said indifferently. “Send him for treatment first. Temporary quarantine.”

At that moment, the damaged I-Model Sentinel Mech was moved away and an Awakened wearing protective suit stood before the middle-aged man. “Leader...”

This person turned out to be a woman with a very conspicuous purple hair.

“I need a report, the sooner the better,” The middle-aged man glanced at the Awakened before him.

“Yes sir,” The purple haired woman hesitated for a moment before speaking out slowly. “The I-Model Sentinel’s anti corrosive coating had a very poor effect. Back then, if I had not urgently utilized fire bombs and intense electrical currents to repel the target, I fear...”

“Include all that into your report,” The middle-aged man in white gave a bitter smile. “When it comes to installation products that are mass produced, those fellows from the Military Arms Department will not use those that are really good. Consider yourself lucky this time. I will consult this matter with the upper brass. The lives of our security personnel are not that cheap! Hmph, there will be squabble this time.”

After saying that, the middle-aged man observed his surroundings and spoke with a serious tone. “According to security protocols, this temporary Entrance and Exit Gate will be completely shut down! Additionally, increase the security system of Zero City by one level. All security personnel will have their vacations cancelled and must assume full duty status! Also... circulate this news to the top and see if further actions are necessary.

“In conclusion, do not be careless! Of all the infiltrative attacks executed by the Electronic Guardians, this one marks the closest that they have ever made towards us! Although they did not manage to infiltrate Zero City, this issue is something that requires an increased amount of vigilance!”

Chapter 102: Demon Soldier Fragments

Standing at the entrance to the flea market, Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao could not help but turn to look at each other.

This was...

Truly a flea market!

It was a broad open street area without any buildings in its surrounding area. Awakened ones were scattered throughout the wide-open space. Some of them erected their booths by spreading a layer of cloth or newspaper on the ground. Then, they hung a signboard with badly written words and just stood there waiting for deals to be struck.

Some were requesting to buy items and some were selling items. There were even those who were seeking information. Chen Xiaolian saw one that made him feel absurd. What he saw was a missing person's post!

"The short haired lady from 3 months ago in instance dungeon number R349. You wore a red jacket and short leather skirt. Your weapon is a scimitar... do you still remember the time when we exchanged antidotes in the instance dungeon? I remember your soft and gentle expression from back then... in these 3 months; I have not been able to forget you. I hope I can meet you again. High priced search notice. Those who provide clues will be given 200 points as thanks."

Chen Xiaolian read up to that point and could not help but laugh out with a "puchi". Both Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao observed the fellow who erected the search notice. The fellow was wearing a black robe, which covered his entire body. On his face was what seemed like a metallic mask, causing his face to appear blurry and indistinct. No matter how one looked upon it, one would only see mosaic...

Clearly, this was an identity concealing equipment.

Chen Xiaolian first brought Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo to the Services Office that was located beside the flea market.

Behind the Services Office's counter, there was also another virtually

projected figure with artificial intelligence. After making a simple inquiry, they learned that they could acquire the identity concealing equipment free. First, spend 1 point to acquire it. After they were finished using it, they can return to the Services Office and return it to regain 1 point.

The Services Office also offered another safety measure: After they have purchased a certain item from the flea market and they wish to keep it a secret, they can enter the Services Office. The Services Office will offer a free teleportation that could teleport them to any public area within Zero City. If they have already verified their identities, they could even request to be directly teleported back into their hotel room!

That was to ensure the absolute safety of both buyers and sellers, preventing any determined individual from tracking and harming anyone.

Chen Xiaolian was unable to help himself and exclaimed in admiration – this was a very considerate service!

After spending 3 points, they rented three sets of identity concealing equipment. After wearing the equipment, they immediately realized the miraculous aspects of the equipment!

After wearing the long black robe, the appearance of their height and size changed. Seemingly, due to a certain projection device, the heights of all three have changed to what appeared as average – neither their gender nor their body shapes were identifiable.

Next, they put on the mask and their faces became concealed. The mask was also equipped with a voice changer. That made it so that any words spoken would automatically become an electronically synthesized sound.

After wearing it though, they faced the problem of not being able to recognize each other – problems might arise if they end up dispersed.

“I feel that it is better if we move separately,” Chen Xiaolian reflected. “Having three people together is also a noticeable characteristic. We should move separately and meet up in the Services Office later. En, let us meet up in 2 hours’ time.”

Qiao Qiao considered it and nodded her head. She was also feeling inquisitive about this flea market and thus, she wanted to look around.

Soo Soo became conflicted. She appeared hesitant in choosing whom to follow but Qiao Qiao dragged Soo Soo away with her in the end.

Before Qiao Qiao left, Chen Xiaolian presented her with 500 points. Qiao Qiao did not have any points after all – regardless, she was his girlfriend. Paying for it when one's girlfriend goes shopping was a man's duty after all.

Thus, with around 1,000 points in hand, Chen Xiaolian strolled aimlessly through the flea market.

Most of the Awakened ones booths have no attendants beside it. There was only a signboard, which conveyed information regarding what the person wished to buy or sell.

Chen Xiaolian circled around twice and found out that most of the booths have a pager. If one desired to conduct a trade, then all they need do was press the pager and the booth owner would quickly come over – the booth owner was also roaming around the marketplace.

The items up for trade in the marketplace were diverse. However, the most commonly seen were weapons and equipment.

The numerous cold weapons included swords, blades, axes, spears, defensive equipment, armours and shields.

He also saw protective suits up for sale... however; nearly all of them were either second-hand or broken.

Chen Xiaolian saw a [B] Class protective suit for sale with a listed going price of 100 points. He was momentarily shocked. After all, even Meteor Rock Guild's special equipment: the [B] Class protective suit required 300 points!

However, he soon saw the line of note behind it: Broken.

After walking around the marketplace for a while, he saw a booth that specialized in repairing equipment. After chatting with the booth owner

for a bit, Chen Xiaolian was able to grasp onto some information.

Some broken equipment were irreparable within the system. However, under special circumstances, some Awakened ones could master this skill when going through instance dungeons. These people can thus make use of this skill to make money.

The price charged for repairing a broken [B] Class weapon or equipment was extremely expensive, almost half the original price! Furthermore, the repaired items would be unable to achieve its original performance and would suffer reduced performance in certain areas.

Chen Xiaolian deliberately produced out his 'Snow Edge' scimitar before a repair booth.

The booth's Awakened glanced at it before quickly stating. "This 'Snow Edge' scimitar should be part of a pair. This item is not bad. However, due to the lack of the other half, it becomes incomplete. Its set ability will not trigger, thus halving its price. If you are willing to sell it, I could set a price for you. If you wish to find the missing half, I can help inquire it for you. But first, we should discuss about the price..."

After discussing for a while, Chen Xiaolian left.

He saw a booth selling pet souls at the intersection.

The booth owner was actually sitting behind his booth.

What caught Chen Xiaolian's attention was what he had written on the signboard: '[A] Class pets for sale.'

[A] Class?

Chen Xiaolian's heart pounded.

However, he soon spied several Awakened ones moving over to inquire the price. After a quick conversation, they shook their heads and left.

Chen Xiaolian went over and lightly rapped the signboard.

The booth owner raised his head. "Are you interested?"

"What pet is it?"

“Black Widow,” Despite going through the electronic synthesizer, the booth owner’s voice was very cold.

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

Chen Xiaolian already has a Black Widow. It was indeed [A] Class, but was temporarily unusable.

However, he has other thoughts in his mind. He asked. “Price?”

“5,000 points,” The booth owner replied coldly.

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

5,000 points? This price was simply fraudulent.

A Mech was just 4,500 points. Although the Black Widow was an [A] Class pet, all pets have to be developed. It would not be able to display [A] Class strength directly after its acquisition.

For 5,000 points, he would be better off buying a Mech.

“Too expensive,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

“Then, how much are you offering?” The other party was clearly disappointed.

Chen Xiaolian thought about it. After strolling around the flea market for so long, he was able to grasp onto a considerable understanding of the market price of many items. After calculating it, he replied. “Maximum of 1,000 points.”

The booth owner snorted. “Does pulling my leg make you happy? If you do not want to buy, then just leave!”

“A [B] Class War Wolf only goes for 300 points,” Chen Xiaolian sneered. “You dared to offer an [A] Class Black Widow for 5,000 points. Are you not the one pulling my leg?”

“According to market price, the price of [A] Class pets is only about five times that of [B] Class pets. The exception would be if they have any special skills, which would cause the price to increase. Within [A] Class pets, Black Widow is only a basic product. If you have a Phoenix, 5,000

points would sound reasonable.”

“Nonsense! A Phoenix is an [S] Class pet! 5,000 points? You may not be able to find a seller even if you offer 10,000 points,” The booth owner sneered.

Chen Xiaolian deliberated and decided to leave and look elsewhere. However, right after taking a step, he caught sight of a small row of sentence at the bottom of the booth owner’s signboard.

“Buying resource materials from Hell Type instance dungeons.”

Hell Type instance dungeons? Resource materials?

Chen Xiaolian immediately halted and pointed towards the signboard. “What do you want to buy?”

“Do you have Demon Souls? Hmph!” The booth owner sneered. “You are a rookie, right? I cannot believe you would even say something like buying a Phoenix for 5,000 points. A Demon Soul is something that you have probably never even seen before. Fine... do you have Demon Fragments? Do you have Demon Servant Fragments? Demon Soldier Fragments, Skeleton Soldier Soul Fragments... any of these items would do. As long as you have them, I will buy it up.”

Chen Xiaolian ignored the harsh tone of the booth owner. Since his younger days, he had adopted the habit of not arguing with buffoons. He gave a faint smile. “What makes you think I won’t have it?”

He retrieved one of the Demon Soldier’s Soul Fragments that he acquired from the 72 Demons instance dungeon from the system .

He possessed 456 of these items! However, he still could not figure out its manner of use.

Upon Chen Xiaolian’s palm, on the surface of the black gloves that he was wearing was a black, shining crystal. A faint mist was swirling inside...

The booth owner became startled!

The booth owner subconsciously reached out with his hand towards it

but Chen Xiaolian quickly retracted his and sneered. “Do you know where we are? Are you thinking of snatching it?”

“Who... who is snatching? I just wanted to verify its authenticity,” The booth owner became flustered and he quickly changed his tone of voice. His voice then became much gentler. “That item, how many do you have?”

“How many do you want?” Chen Xiaolian sneered. “What is your offer price?”

“Two points for one. I will buy however much you have!” The booth owner exclaimed.

Chen Xiaolian sneered. Turning around, he walked away.

1 The 72 Demons instance dungeon () was the first instance dungeon Chen Xiaolian had to participate in.

Chapter 103: Gryphon?

“Wait! Wait!” The booth owner became anxious and quickly leapt out from behind. He halted before Chen Xiaolian. “Don’t just leave! How can one just leave due to one disagreeable word when making transactions? What is your offer price then?”

“I do not like to make offers, you do it,” Chen Xiaolian said indifferently. “However, if you are being dishonest, then I have no time to waste here.”

The booth owner gritted his teeth and hesitated for a moment. “Five points each!”

Chen Xiaolian quietly regarded the booth owner and maintained his silence.

“You! Don’t be too greedy!” The booth owner was somewhat furious. He pointed at Chen Xiaolian and clenched his teeth. “It is just a Demon Soldier Fragment! It is but one of the low-levelled materials from Hell Type instance dungeons! Back then, the price for this item was only three or four points each! Recently though, the demand for it suddenly increased, causing the market price to become chaotic. My offer price is a high one!”

Chen Xiaolian was startled... demand for it suddenly increased, high price...

Seeing Chen Xiaolian maintain his silence, the booth owner forcefully stamped his foot. “Fine! I will let you butcher me once! Eight points each! Any more than that is not possible for me!”

Price of eight points...

Chen Xiaolian calculated; the Demon Soldier Fragments within his system box was enough for him to buy a Standard Edition Sentinel Mech!

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment. “How many do you want?”

“Three... two hundred,” The booth owner snorted. “I do not have that many points with me. Do you have 200?”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly laughed out, and deliberately did so openly. “I have 200. However... I am not lacking in points.”

“You... are you jerking me?” The booth owner clenched his fists and appeared very incensed. It appeared that he was a hot-tempered person. If this were not Zero City, he would probably have attacked Chen Xiaolian.

“I am not jerking you,” Chen Xiaolian disregarded the booth owner’s fists. Chen Xiaolian was already familiar with Zero City’s rules; he believed that this fellow would not dare to start a fight here. “You can use items to make the exchange. I do not just want points.”

“... You have taken a fancy to the Black Widow,” The booth owner exhaled.

“Yes, the Black Widow. I will not swindle you. According to the market price, Black Widow amounts to 1,500 points. You can add 100 points and I will give you 200 Demon Soldier Fragments,” Chen Xiaolian gave a soft smile. “I believe this transaction is very fair.”

“Fair your sister!” The booth owner became furious. “That is not the Black Widow’s price! Last year, the Black Widow was sold in the market for 2,000 points!”

“Oh, so it is 2,000 points eh?” Chen Xiaolian coldly replied. “Then, why did you offer to sell it for 5,000 points?”

“...” The booth owner was tongue-tied and he hesitated for a while. “I...”

“If you want to swindle others, then you should feel for yourself the feeling of being swindled,” Chen Xiaolian shrugged his shoulders.

“Besides, I was not swindling you. The price of 1,500 points for a Black Widow is considered consistent with the market price.”

“...”

The owner booth hesitated and Chen Xiaolian laughed. “I have no time to waste with you. If you are not willing, so be it. I am not in a hurry to buy a pet.”

After saying that, he raised his leg and moved away. After taking his

second step, the booth owner suddenly stamped his foot. "Wait!"

Chen Xiaolian turned around.

The booth owner spat out brutally. "You are a vicious one! This senior is in urgent need of those Demon Soldier Fragments! I will just have to let you butcher me again! Black Widow for 1,500 points!"

Pausing, he suddenly continued. "However, I will not give you the 100 points. I will give you something else. How about it?"

Chen Xiaolian was not too concerned and he asked with indifference. "Something else?"

"I have some goods with me that my guild members asked me to sell off. These are some rare goods. I guarantee that you won't find them anywhere else."

"It is something you are forced to take out, right?" Chen Xiaolian sneered. "Very well, let me have a look. I am curious to see what you would label as a treasure."

At any rate, Chen Xiaolian was not too concerned with the remaining 100 points. He felt that he should check things out before anything else.

"Of course it is a good item!" The booth owner supplied. "In an Egyptian instance dungeon, my guild acquired some rare pet souls. However... they are all cubs. Although their level is not very high, you can try to nurture them."

"Rare pet souls?" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "What is it?"

"Gryphons!" The booth owner deliberately raised his chin. "How about it? You have heard of it, right?"

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

Gryphon... he had not seen this pet before. However, while he was on the plane to Japan, he had discussed with the two veterans, Lun Tai and Bei Tai. Through them, he learnt about many things.

He seemed to recall hearing about this pet:

Gryphon: This pet is under the [B] Class category. However, majority of people agree that it holds the best price to performance ratio!

The reason being that it has an [A] Class Growth Capacity. Most importantly, it is a flying pet. Whenever the need arises, it could be mounted by either Awakened ones or Players!

It has the combined function of both pet and mount!

“However, there is a very minor problem with my Gryphon that I need to explain to you,” The booth owner hesitated for a moment. “A [B] Class pet is something that you should have surveyed for in the market. The price is around 300 points. Although mine is cheap, there is a very minor problem. It is... broken.”

“Broken?” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

“En,” The booth owner replied ambiguously. “This was an unexpected acquisition from the instance dungeon. However, the system states that it is still possible to adopt a broken pet soul as a pet. There will only be some issues with probability. In other words... a successful activation means that it will become your pet. A failed activation...”

“A failed activation means I get nothing, right?” Chen Xiaolian sneered.

“... Yes,” The booth owner replied with a low voice.

Truthfully, he was not being honest.

The so-called unexpected acquisition from what instance dungeon was all lies.

Truth was his guild and another Awakened were involved in some shady business in the last instance dungeon. Then, his guild had killed off the other Awakened who specialized in pet summoning skills. It was rather similar to the big-breasted woman from Da Vinci's Wind Slasher Guild.

Killing others while committing shady business was no different than killing others to plunder their items. How could the booth owner come clean about that?

After the Awakened died, he dropped several items. Amongst them was

a bunch of pet souls.

Unfortunately, due to the intense battle, the pet souls were broken.

Broken pet souls will have its activation rate reduced... To put it bluntly, it would depend on luck.

The booth owner and his companions had tried to activate two pet souls. In the end, they failed and got nothing.

They dared not try out the rest and decided to peddle them in the market. Perhaps they could swindle others.

“You are making quite a favourable deal,” Chen Xiaolian replied with disdain. “If it was possible to activate, why didn’t you sell it after activation? Hmph...”

“That is why it is so cheap,” The booth owner shook his head. “It is a Gryphon soul. Even though it is broken, there is a possibility of activating it to become a Gryphon. That thing is worth 300 points. I am only charging you 100 points for that, what do you think?”

“There is nothing to it!” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “I am not interested.”

“That...” The booth owner rolled his eyes. Although he was wearing a mask to hide his expression, Chen Xiaolian could sense his change in expression. The booth owner then sighed. “How about this... I will give you two Gryphon souls! With two souls, the activation probability would be much higher, right? If the first fails, the second should succeed, right?”

“Do you take me for a fool?” Chen Xiaolian burst out in laughter. “If that could succeed, would you not have done so?”

“I am not opening it because I do not need a [B] Class pet. Besides, if I had opened it myself, the price would become 300 points. If you want to buy cheap items, you must take the risk. Gains only come when there are risks involved. Am I wrong?”

“The souls I sell to you can certainly be opened. If you do not trust me, you can ask around the marketplace. Those who are in the pet trade

understand this rationale. There are even people who specialize in selling broken pet souls! Whether you can open it or not would depend on your luck.”

Chen Xiaolian deliberated and abruptly said. “Two is not enough.”

“... Don’t be so greedy!” The booth owner was enraged. “That is 100 points for two [B] Class pet souls! Are you still not satisfied?”

“Those are broken pet souls,” Chen Xiaolian replied with indifference. “Our transaction is based on resources. If you are willing, then that is good. If you are not willing, then so be it. After all, I am not begging you to make a trade.”

The booth owner gritted his teeth and stomped his foot again. “I have a total of eight broken Gryphon souls! However, 100 points will not do! Make your offer! I will give it all to you! How about... give me some more Demon Soldier Fragments! How many more fragments do you have?”

Seeing the other party finally exposing his tail, Chen Xiaolian smiled.

Chen Xiaolian deliberated: He has 456 fragments.

However... he suddenly did not want to sell away all of the fragments!

He had obtained information from the booth owner that the demand for it had suddenly increased! This led to the Demon Soldier Fragment, a Hell Type material becoming very scarce.

Chen Xiaolian felt that it was better to play it safe. It would be for the best to keep some with him.

“I have a total of 256 fragments,” Chen Xiaolian replied indifferently. “I will give it all to you. In return, you will give me the Black Widow and the eight broken Gryphon souls. En... give me some pet food as well.”

The booth owner nearly coughed out blood.

The earlier transaction was 200 fragments for a Black Widow. Chen Xiaolian then added 56 more fragments, which has a maximum value of around 500 points.

500 points in exchange for eight Gryphon souls... even though they

were broken, their market price meant that the booth owner was suffering a huge loss.

Unfortunately...

The Demon Soldier Fragments were something that he urgently required!

“Deal! I will gift you a bag of Black Widow pet food!”

“Five bags,” Chen Xiaolian added softly.

“... Are you specifically here to swindle me? I will give it to you!” The booth owner stomped his foot.

Soon, they both reached the Services Office. There, they acquired a contract from the counter. After signing the contract, they handed it to the Services Office’s A.I. for safekeeping.

Then, they proceeded to exchange items.

Chen Xiaolian produced the 256 Demon Soldier Fragments while the booth owner took out a Black Widow soul and eight Gryphon souls.

Chen Xiaolian received a system prompt stating that the other party had gifted him the goods.

Chen Xiaolian quickly checked the system.

There was no problem with the Black Widow soul. The system prompt there was similar to the one on his Black Widow soul.

The one thing that made Chen Xiaolian intrigued was the eight Gryphon souls.

The system prompt clearly stated: It has a certain probability of activation.

It has a certain probability of activation?

Chen Xiaolian suddenly recalled the online games that he used to play and the equipment with various characteristics and probabilities.

However, Chen Xiaolian did not intend to activate these eight Gryphon souls to become pets.

He did not even use the Black Widow for himself! Not to mention this is a [B] Class Gryphon.

He has a different purpose in mind for these broken Gryphon souls.

As for the Black Widows, he was of the opinion of... giving one to both Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo.

The two sisters still do not have a pet.

As for Roddy... that fellow's brain was stuffed full of machines and Mechs. Chen Xiaolian felt that he would have to let Roddy go with a technological type of build in the future.

Chen Xiaolian had inquired about it in the market today. Not all pets were of the biological type like cats, dogs, tigers, lions or insects.

There were machine types of pets as well!

Xia Xiaolei on the other hand... Chen Xiaolian designated him as a logistic treasure!

With the Heavenly defying Haggling skill, he was expected to help the guild earn points!

Do not belittle Chen Xiaolian for making only one transaction after circling the flea market for nearly two hours. Truthfully, he had been spending most of his time asking around about the market price for many items.

Additionally, he also acquired some information.

That black hearted booth owner was not wrong. After deliberately asking around, Chen Xiaolian obtained some information regarding Hell Type materials.

Throughout the flea market, there were around seven to eight different people requesting to buy Hell Type materials. These people were requesting to buy it everywhere.

Nonetheless, these Hell Type materials were too rare within the marketplace

Most importantly, Chen Xiaolian obtained another piece of information. During this time's opening for Zero City, the shops set up by the top guilds within the southern business district had all their Hell Type materials taken off the shelves!

This meant that those top guilds were hoarding Hell Type materials!

After finding out about this, Chen Xiaolian felt a twinge of regret.

He regretted being too hasty in selling off those Demon Soldier Fragments.

After pondering about it though, his system box still has 200 fragments. Additionally... there was still one of the 72 Demons, Amon's soul!

That was a premium high-grade material!

Chapter 104: A Pleasant Surprise

Chen Xiaolian returned to the marketplace and strolled around a bit more. He attempted to obtain more information regarding 'Hell Type materials'.

However, he was unable to find any precise information regarding why these materials would suddenly be in short supply.

Seeing as the time was almost up, Chen Xiaolian returned to the Services Office to meet up with Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo.

Despite wandering for a few hours, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo did not buy anything. They could not help but feel shocked at what they saw and heard within the flea market.

For the sake of safety, they did not choose to walk back. Instead, they chose to authenticate their identities in the Services Office. Thus, they acquired permission to enter a private room and use a teleportation array to directly teleport back to the 'Tourist Lodge' where they were staying.

Checking the time, Chen Xiaolian saw that there was less than an hour before the appointed moment to meet up with Lun Tai and the rest.

After deliberating for a moment, Chen Xiaolian returned to his room while Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo rested in the living room. After entering his own room, Chen Xiaolian produced the items that he had purchased and began his inspection.

[Gryphon soul (Broken): There is a probability of summoning out a pet Gryphon. If activation is successful, you will acquire a pet Gryphon. If activation fails, this item will disappear].

It really is a shitty deal. Chen Xiaolian faintly smiled.

However, that was not his goal. Although the Gryphon was quite a good pet, Chen Xiaolian did not intend to test his luck by trying to summon out a Gryphon.

His intention was...

Devour!

Four-Eyed Adorable Cat... Fine, let us call it the Four-Eyed War Cat...

All the Players considered this cat to be a shitty pet for a good reason. Its skills were quite good; the same was true regarding its melee abilities. The problem however, resided with its low Growth Capacity .

Although pets can devour other pet souls to increase their Growth Capacity... the Four-Eyed War Cat was originally a [B] Class War Pet. Additionally, it held the title of the one with the lowest price to performance ratio.

Who would be willing to spend a huge price to let it devour other pet souls? Isn't it better to simply open another pet?

Chen Xiaolian later found out from the experienced Lun Tai about something so ridiculous, it would render one speechless.

The number of species of pet souls that was suitable for the Four-Eyed War Cat to devour was too small!

When devouring pets, it would be best if their attributes were compatible. Back then, Chen Xiaolian had attempted to let the Four-Eyed War Cat devour the Black Widow's soul. In the end, the system prompted that due to incompatibility in attributes, the success rate was only about 1%... With such shitty odds, who would be willing to go test it out?

Chen Xiaolian found out from the experienced Lun Tai that the so-called attribute compatibility generally pertained to one rule: Similarity of species.

First, consider the type of pet in question. A mammal was better off devouring other mammals.

Letting a mammal devour an insect would cause it to feel uncomfortable.

Under the mammal category were other specific parts that required discretion.

Take the Adorable Cat for example. It was an animal of the feline

family. If you were to let it devour a War Wolf, the probability of success may be higher than that of devouring insects, but not by far.

A feline and a canine would certainly show signs of rejection.

Simply put, the more similar the species, the higher the success rate will be.

Chen Xiaolian had analysed this matter beforehand. The best method to let Garfield grow would be to find 'feline animals'.

An example of that would be tigers, lions and leopards.

The problem was... the reason everyone viewed Garfield as the worst pet was...

Even within the feline family, it was also the weakest!

Think about it, if you have a feline pet of the tiger type... is there any need to let Garfield devour it? Just open it up and use it! It is stronger than Garfield argh!

That was why no one will idiotically choose to strengthen Garfield... because that sort of action was too wasteful!

As a result, the number of Players and Awakened ones from all levels who would adopt Four-Eyed War Cat as a pet was very small.

Even if there were, those who do were all at the newbie and rookie stage. To them, the Four-Eyed War Cat was just something to help them temporarily through that stage. Once they acquire a better pet, they would immediately discard the Four-Eyed War Cat!

However, Chen Xiaolian was a humane and soft-hearted fellow who chose to not use an [A] Class Black Widow. Instead, he continued keeping this Adorable Cat.

"Gryphon, Gryphon... its name has a lion word . Lions are feline animals. It should at least have feline attributes and be compatible with Garfield."

Chen Xiaolian considered it before transferring one Gryphon soul from the system into the War Pet interface, letting Garfield devour it...

[Prompt: Inputting Gryphon soul (Broken). Due to compatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 61.4%. Do you wish to continue?]

Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief!

61.4%. This rate of success has achieved the rate that he expected!

Without any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian chose to continue.

In the system interface, Garfield instantly transformed into a brilliant mass of golden light. After the golden light faded away...

[Prompt: Inputted Gryphon soul (Broken). Devour failed, item has disappeared].

Chen Xiaolian's eyes bulged out and he cursed out loudly: "F**k!"

Is my luck so bad? I failed with a probability that is above 60%?

Again!

At any rate, there are still eight Gryphon souls. After failing one, I still have seven more!

[Prompt: Inputting Gryphon soul (Broken). Due to compatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 57.9%. Do you wish to continue?]

Eh? The success rate has changed?

Chen Xiaolian mumbled softly to himself and came to understand the gist of the problem.

Probably, each Gryphon has varying degrees of Broken state. Thus, each of those Gryphon souls would have varying rate of success!

[Prompt: Inputted Gryphon soul (Broken). Devour successful].

Chen Xiaolian laughed out! My luck is picking up! A success rate of 61% ended up with failure. A success rate of 57% ended up with success.

In the interface, a golden light flashed across Garfield's body.

His body did not appear to have changed much.

However, after opening the interface for his attributes, Chen Xiaolian saw that Garfield's attribute values have changed.

Physique, Endurance, Agility, Energy... none of those exhibited any change. However...

[Four-Eyed War Cat].

Growth Capacity: [B]

A progress bar appeared behind the alphabet [B] that was located behind the Growth Capacity!

Since the devouring process was successful, the progress bar moved forward rapidly from 0% to 100%!

A "ding" resounded and a golden light flashed out.

The value changed!

Growth Capacity: [B+]

Chen Xiaolian's heart pounded with excitement!

He opened the interface containing Garfield's attributes...

Garfield's original attribute values were:

Physique: [B]

Endurance: [C]

Agility: [C+]

Energy Points: [C-]

Comprehensive Melee Ability: [B-]

No apparent change was evident, however!

At the back of all four attributes: Physique, Endurance, Agility and Energy Points was a '↑' symbol!

An up arrow!

Chen Xiaolian tried to check it out.

He discovered that as long as he gave it a thought while looking at the

up arrow, a prompt would appear on the interface:

[Prompt: Number of enhancement left: 1 time(s). Current Growth Capacity is at [B+], each attribute values cannot exceed Growth Capacity].

This meant that Chen Xiaolian could choose to upgrade any one of the four attributes.

Naturally, he cannot enhance Comprehensive Melee Ability. It was a value obtained through comprehensive evaluation after all.

Chen Xiaolian pondered it through and chose to enhance Physique! Physique rose from [B] to [B+]!

At that moment, the Four-Eyed War Cat within the interface abruptly raised his head and made a roaring gesture. A golden light flashed and Garfield's figure trembled for a bit.

Chen Xiaolian noted that the claws on the Four-Eyed War Cat's front paws were emitting a golden glow!

Is this the indication that his strength and attack power has become stronger?

Chen Xiaolian was secretly delighted and continued with the devouring process without hesitation.

[Prompt, inputting Gryphon's soul (Broken). Due to compatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 77.1%. Do you wish to continue?].

[Prompt: Inputted Gryphon soul (Broken). Devour successful].

This time too, a progress bar appeared behind the [B+] alphabet of the Growth Capacity.

However, this time's successful devouring process only brought the progress bar to 50% before stopping.

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

One successful devouring process was enough to propel [B] Class to

[B+] Class.

However, to propel Garfield from [B+] to a higher realm, one successful devouring process was not enough.

The higher the level, the more materials Chen Xiaolian has to spend on the devouring process.

Once again, Chen Xiaolian chose to continue the devouring process.

[Prompt, inputting Gryphon's soul (Broken). Due to compatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 47.9%. Do you wish to continue?].

[Prompt: Inputted Gryphon soul (Broken). Devour successful].

This time's process only had a success rate of 47.9%, causing Chen Xiaolian to become somewhat worried.

Thankfully, luck was on his side and he continued to be successful!

The progress bar reached 100%!

Growth Capacity rose from [B+] to [A-].

[Prompt: Number of enhancement left: 2 time(s). Current Growth Capacity is at [A-], each attribute values cannot exceed Growth Capacity].

Chen Xiaolian smiled satisfactorily.

This time's upgrade gave him 2 enhancements. That was quite fair.

After hesitating for a moment, Chen Xiaolian chose to continue enhancing Physique.

Physique rose to [A-].

After hesitating, Chen Xiaolian used the remaining enhancement on Agility.

Agility rose from [C+] to [B-].

At that moment, a pleasant surprise arrived!

[Prompt: Your Four-Eyed War Cat has achieved the required conditions.

New skill activated: Lightning Doppelganger].

Dayum! New skill activated?!

Chen Xiaolian was overjoyed!

Garfield originally has 3 skills as stated by the system below:

Combat Skills: Tiger Rush ([B] Class Melee Skill), Cat's Roar ([C-] Class Ranged Skill), Adorable Flash (Are you sure this is a skill?)

As implied by its name, Tiger Rush was easy to understand.

As for the Cat's Roar skill, Chen Xiaolian felt that it was very useful. At the very least, it came with a stun effect, the probability involved notwithstanding.

However... that Adorable Flash skill... Chen Xiaolian believed that skill was certainly a prank by the Development Team!

At any rate, Chen Xiaolian has yet to discover any use for that ability. He has also not tried using it before.

Now, the skills list has been added with this [Lightning Doppelganger]?

[Lightning Doppelganger]: [B] Class Skill, Melee / Ranged dual attributes. Four-Eyed War Cat's ultimate skill. In battle, it can transform out doppelganger(s) to do battle. Each doppelganger has the same attack power as the original body. The number of doppelgangers depends on the pet's Agility. Every Class of enhancement will allow the number of doppelgangers to increase by 1. Note: This pet's current Agility is at [B-], it can transform out 2 doppelgangers].

“ ”

Countless 'son of a bitch' sentences stampeded through Chen Xiaolian's head.

Why didn't you son of a bitch tell me earlier!!! If you had said so, this senior would have pumped all enhancements into Agility eargh!!!

1 Recap: Growth Capacity is the limit that their attributes can achieve. For example, a pet with a [B] Class Growth Capacity can only have a

maximum Agility of [B] Class. It cannot have a [B+] Class Agility.

2 The name Gryphon in Chinese is ‘狮鹫’, pinyin: ‘shī jiù’. ‘狮’ (shī) means lion and ‘鹫’ (jiù) means eagle.

Chapter 105: Advancing Bai Qi

Chen Xiaolian was infuriated!

Doppelgangers!

That was a Heavenly defying skill!

Each doppelganger was tantamount to increasing battle power by 100%!

The current Garfield has 2 doppelgangers. Add that to his original body... that meant, he could unleash 300% of battle power during battles!

This ability caused Chen Xiaolian to salivate!

“Son of a bitch! Continue devouring!”

Chen Xiaolian was both overjoyed and shocked!

There were four broken Gryphon souls left in the system box.

Chen Xiaolian eagerly began the devouring process.

This time, he intended to increase Garfield from [A-] to a higher level.

Each successful devouring process could only increase the progress bar by 25%!

Chen Xiaolian secretly made the calculations: I have four Gryphon souls; each one gives 25%, that is just enough to level up once!

However, just as he was thinking about this perfect scenario, a tragedy occurred!

The first devouring process was a success: 25%.

The second devouring process was also a success: 50%.

During the third devouring process...

[Prompt, inputting Gryphon's soul (Broken). Due to compatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 56.3%. Do you wish to continue?].

[Prompt: Inputted Gryphon soul (Broken). Devour failed, item has disappeared].

“Damn it!”

Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded.

One has failed...

He turned to look at the progress bar, which was stuck at 50%...

Next, he turned to look at the system box, there was only one Gryphon soul left...

Even if this devouring process succeeded, it would only be able to push the progress bar to 75%. It was not enough for a level up!

Chen Xiaolian turned somewhat frantic.

His first thought was to immediately return to the flea market and try searching for other pet souls of the feline type.

However...

Chen Xiaolian knew that it was unlikely to happen.

Within the system, pets of the feline type were scarce.

There was an additional factor. One could consider the Gryphon as the lowest levelled pet amongst feline types... if they exclude the Four-Eyed War Cat.

In the marketplace, purchasing an intact Gryphon required 500 points or above. Usually, ordinary [B] Class pets would require 300 points or more. However, the Gryphon's function as a mount gave its price a boost.

As for the higher levelled pets... lion type or tiger type... Chen Xiaolian could not afford those!

Additionally... those were essentially not for sale.

In his survey of the market today, he found that the highest levelled pet sold amongst pet sellers was the [A] Class Black Widow.

The others were nothing more than basic pets of the [B] Class. There were also low-levelled [C] Class pets for sale. Clearly, those [C] Class pets will serve as materials for the devouring process.

The problem however, resided in the fact that there were no pets of the feline type in [C] Class...

Chen Xiaolian tried to use the last Gryphon soul.

[Prompt, inputting Gryphon's soul (Broken). Due to compatibility with the original War Pet, Four-Eyed War Cat, success rate of devouring is at 98.5%. Do you wish to continue?]

Chen Xiaolian was so shocked he did not choose continue.

En?

98.5%!

Why is the success rate so high?

He suddenly thought of a possibility...

Could it be? The Broken degree of this Gryphon soul is relatively lower?

In that case, this success rate of 98.5% could mean that this Gryphon soul's degree of wholeness is at 98.5%?

If that is the case, there is no need to be hasty in devouring it!

Besides, even if it is successful, it could only push the progress bar up to 75%. Garfield still cannot level up.

Why don't I... keep it!

Perhaps, it will be more worthwhile to activate it to open out a Gryphon?

Chen Xiaolian quietly kept the last Gryphon soul.

As he was preparing to leave the room, Chen Xiaolian swept his eyes through the system's item box.

His gaze fell onto... the Tiger Tally!

Tiger Tally... summon out Bai Qi's War Soul...

According to the system's description, after every use, it would require a cool down time of 24 hours.

That was why Chen Xiaolian never got the chance to examine this item

properly after exiting the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang.

On one hand, after leaving the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, he had to rush over to Japan, leaving him with no free time.

On the other hand, Chen Xiaolian had this thought in mind: Keep it ready so that I can summon out Bai Qi to do battle if I encounter danger. If I summon him hastily to conduct an inspection, then in the following 24 hours, if I encounter danger, then I will be at a loss.

However, this place was Zero City, a place of absolute safety. Here, he will not encounter any attacks or dangerous situations.

Besides, he was certainly going to stay here for two days.

Since that was the case, he may as well take this opportunity...

Checking the time, he observed that there was still 20 minutes before the appointed meeting time. Chen Xiaolian sat down on the carpet beside the bed.

He retrieved the Tiger Tally...

...

A black coloured light flashed before him and a dense mass of black coloured mist appeared instantly before him.

Next, Bai Qi stepped out from amongst the black mist!

His appearance looked the same as when he appeared in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang.

White coloured clothes, a bored demeanour and a cold and indifferent expression.

Chen Xiaolian was however, surprised to note that this Bai Qi before him was somewhat shorter than the one he met in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang.

This Bai Qi has roughly the same stature as Soo Soo.

This was like a mini version of Bai Qi.

“What is going on here?” Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned.

However, he soon came up with a conjecture.

Back when he acquired Bai Qi's soul, the system had already pointed it out: The battle power of Bai Qi's soul was reduced to [A] Class. This was likely the reason why Bai Qi was in a mini state.

The Bai Qi that he encountered within the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang... according to Miao Yan, the Bai Qi from back then should be of the [S] Class!

Chen Xiaolian sat across Bai Qi and they both regarded each other.

Bai Qi's face remained indifferent and cold and his eyes showed not even a trace of emotion. Even after looking at Chen Xiaolian for a good half minute, his eyes continued to exhibit no change, not even a trace of impatience.

He simply stood before Chen Xiaolian. If not for his human body shape, he would simply be an iceberg.

"Err... can you talk? Do you remember me? We met in Epang Palace."

Chen Xiaolian carefully asked.

Bai Qi remained indifferent, not bothering to raise his eyes. He remained silent as he looked at Chen Xiaolian.

Unable to communicate?

Chen Xiaolian deliberated. Then, he pointed to the floor before him. "Sit down then."

Bai Qi quietly sat down cross-legged across Chen Xiaolian.

En, it seems I can command him.

Observing the silent but obedient Bai Qi before him, Chen Xiaolian recalled the invincible Bai Qi from the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang who displayed divine might and prestige...

For some unknown reason, Chen Xiaolian's heart suddenly felt a hint of sadness.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian inadvertently turned his gaze to the

system interface.

He then discovered something out of place!

Within the War Pet interface, Chen Xiaolian originally only has a Four-Eyed War Cat.

But now... within the War Pet interface, suddenly... an image of mini Bai Qi appeared!

Bai Qi... is considered... a pet?

What is going on?

Chen Xiaolian was surprised and he quickly went to the interface to inspect Bai Qi's attributes.

Next, he became dumbfounded.

[Unknown Pet, Unknown Type.

Physique: ???

Endurance: ???

Agility: ???

Energy Points: ???

Growth Capacity: ???

Comprehensive Evaluation: [A] Class.

Skill(s): Unknown].

Damn it, what is this supposed to be?

With the exception of the Comprehensive Evaluation, which is at [A] Class, the rest are all question marks! Even his skills are unknown!

Chen Xiaolian's heart suddenly throbbed as he recalled something very important!

If... the system views Bai Qi as a pet...

Then... perhaps he could... grow using the devouring process?

Thinking of that possibility caused Chen Xiaolian's heart to palpitate!

If he can... then I may have the chance to use the shortest amount of time to let Bai Qi recover to the state he was in back in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. If someone obstructs me, I will kill that someone. If a God obstructs me, I will kill that God! That kind of overwhelmingly powerful BOSS!

Thinking back to how Da Vinci, a High Class Player was easily butchered by that power, Chen Xiaolian's heart was set ablaze!

After that, something happened to shock him further!

Upon Bai Qi's prompt within the pet interface, was this line: [Unknown War Pet, Undead Type. It can devour Undead Type pets to level up].

Undead Type?

Chen Xiaolian suddenly remembered: Demon Soldier Fragments, does it count as Undead Type?

It seems... there is not much of a difference, right?

He quickly transferred out a piece of Demon Soldier Fragment from the system box and dragged it into the War Pet interface, attempting to let Bai Qi devour it.

However, no reaction appeared on the interface!

As Chen Xiaolian was feeling somewhat disappointed, Bai Qi who was in front of him suddenly extended his hand out in a slow manner.

Bai Qi's right hand moved up, the palm spreading open.

Although Bai Qi's expression remained cold and indifferent, Chen Xiaolian understood the meaning behind this gesture.

It means: Give me?

Chen Xiaolian quickly produced a piece of Demon Soldier Fragment from the system box, gripping it in his hand.

The Demon Soldier Fragment was a very small black coloured crystal. However, the purity of its colour seemed assorted and it was not solely black in colour. Instead, there was a huge amount of grey coloured

impurity.

Chen Xiaolian tested putting the piece of Demon Soldier Fragment onto Bai Qi's palm...

The indifferent eyes of Bai Qi suddenly lit up!

Bai Qi opened up his mouth slightly. Next, a black qi emerged out from the black coloured crystal on his palm. The black qi rapidly moved into his mouth and nose!

Then... the crystal on his palm melted before disappearing!

"It seems... to be of use?"

Chen Xiaolian's heart became somewhat excited.

He did not hesitate to retrieve out more Demon Soldier Fragments.

One piece... two pieces... five pieces... ten pieces...

When Chen Xiaolian placed the 30th piece of Demon Soldier Fragment onto Bai Qi's palm...

After absorbing the fragment, Bai Qi looked at Chen Xiaolian who was trying to take more fragment out. Bai Qi shook his head slowly and retracted his hand.

Chen Xiaolian sensed that Bai Qi who was standing before him had undergone a certain change. However, he was unable to tell what that change was.

He examined the War Pet interface and discovered...

No change in Bai Qi's attributes. They all remained as question marks and the skills remained unknown. The Comprehensive Evaluation also remained at [A] Class.

After absorbing 30 Demon Soldier Fragments... there was no change?

As Chen Xiaolian was feeling disappointed, Bai Qi suddenly stood up.

After Bai Qi stood up, Chen Xiaolian discovered where the change had occurred!

Bai Qi has grown taller!

Earlier on, Bai Qi was similar to Soo Soo in stature, resembling a 10-year-old in terms of height.

After devouring 30 Demon Soldier Fragments, Bai Qi's height has increased by roughly over 10 centimetres!

Looking at him, the current Bai Qi should have a height of roughly 1.4 metres, right?

Bai Qi stood there and turned his body about, seemingly in the midst of adjusting to his changed body.

Next... his right hand suddenly slipped into his left sleeve. Slowly, he pulled out a sword!

It was a translucent, crystal like sword, with a faint colour of blood on its surface! That colour of blood was extremely faint! Without a detailed examination, one might miss that colour.

Chen Xiaolian however, was able to identify it. Within the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang, Bai Qi had used this sword to kill off the Players!

The only difference was that the colour of blood had dimmed considerably, leaving only a thin trace of that colour.

The size of the sword was also much smaller. Within the instance dungeon, the sword was 3 feet (0.9 m) long.

However, the one currently held by Bai Qi was only roughly the same length as a dagger.

Despite that, Bai Qi's eyes revealed a faint trace of delight.

He appeared satisfied as he examined the sword in his hand.

Bai Qi then turned around to look at Chen Xiaolian. Opening his mouth, he spoke.

The words and tone that came out sounded laborious, resembling those of a babbling infant, very toilsome.

Nonetheless, Chen Xiaolian managed to understand those words.

“Undead, enough; lifeblood, not enough. Two types, balance, absorb.”

Chapter 106: Sea of Love

After Chen Xiaolian walked out into the living room, Qiao Qiao gave him a faint smile. “What were you doing while locking yourself up in the bedroom?”

Chen Xiaolian did not laugh. He walked before the two females and said slowly. “Come, I have something to show you.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian used the gift function in the system to give a Black Widow soul to Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao was surprised. After receiving the system prompt, she frowned. “What is this?”

“War Pet,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly. “You have yet to participate in an instance dungeon. That is why you do not quite understand; having a War Pet to help during battles will make you more powerful. The one I gave you is an [A] Class pet. It is considered a relatively rare pet.”

Qiao Qiao’s expression turned serious immediately and she quickly inspected it through the system.

Chen Xiaolian continued. “Let us take this opportunity and try activating it first to see its effect.”

“Here?” Qiao Qiao was hesitant.

Chen Xiaolian smiled softly and proceeded to move aside the coffee table and other items within the living room aside, creating an open space. Next, he pulled Soo Soo to a corner of the wall and said to Qiao Qiao. “Try it out, do not be afraid. This thing will be obedient to you. Summon it out and familiarize yourself with it.”

Qiao Qiao took a deep breath before summoning out the Black Widow.

Following a brilliant burst of light, a massive black spider covered in black coloured shell appeared in the middle of the room before the three of them!

The huge size of the black spider caught Qiao Qiao off guard and she

was shocked. This girl's instinctive fear towards insects caused her expression to pale and she unconsciously took several steps back.

On the other hand, although Soo Soo showed some fear, she only held tightly onto Chen Xiaolian's arm. She did not utter out any voice; her face was taut and she gritted her teeth. However, she refused to hide behind Chen Xiaolian.

The Black Widow was massive in size.

It has a height of roughly 2.5 metres. Although this luxurious suite has a height surpassing the ordinary, the distance between the ceiling and the Black Widow standing in the middle of the living room was very small.

A huge body with eight sickle-like claws spreading out to resemble a gigantic round table, its diameter was roughly between 4 to 5 metres.

Even though the living room was very spacious, its appearance immediately occupied a major amount of space, forcing Qiao Qiao to the corner of the walls.

The Black Widow's outer shell was black and shiny, with a sheen that resembled those from metal surfaces. The sharp mouth upon its head and the sharp sickle-like claws gave off the impression that it has no blind spot!

Its organ for shooting out webs rested at the back area of its abdomen.

The Black Widow stood in the centre of the living room in a hunched posture. After receiving Chen Xiaolian's encouragement, Qiao Qiao summoned up her courage and moved forward.

The Black Widow did not oppose her actions and allowed Qiao Qiao to move in front of it. Qiao Qiao extended her hand to touch the Black Widow's thick sickle-like claws. Feeling the coldness through her hands, she got braver and lightly rapped it, feeling how hard it was.

"The Black Widow's shell is very hard and it has very outstanding defence. I have previously seen another Player use it in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. Ordinary swords cannot hope to pierce through its outer shell," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "A spider has eight legs. In battle, it could

utilize all eight limbs at will and has no blind spot in terms of offence and defence. Its only weakness is the rear part. When in battle, make sure to take note of that area.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian examined the Black Widow using the system. Then, he got Qiao Qiao to share out the attribute values of the Black Widow.

Black Widow

Physique: [A-]

Endurance: [B]

Agility: [B-]

Energy Points: [C]

Comprehensive Evaluation: [A-]

Growth Capacity: [A]

Skills: Cyclone Cleaver (Melee Skill, [B+] Class), Poison Attack (Melee Skill, [B] Class: This attack can cause target to sustain damage over time. This attack has no effect on non-living targets.), Binding Spider Web (Melee Skill, [B] Class: This attack sprays out spider webs to restrain the opponent.).

Looking at those attributes caused Chen Xiaolian to feel very satisfied.

As expected from an [A] Class pet! Its initial state alone is stronger than that Adorable Cat by two grades! My own Adorable Cat had devoured so many Gryphon souls to match this Black Widow's attribute values, albeit barely.

Although it cannot show off its combat abilities here, Qiao Qiao commanded the Black Widow to move about within the living room. Despite the restriction, Qiao Qiao was slowly able to grasp onto the sense of being in command.

Next, they tested its skills.

Utilizing the Cyclone Cleaver skill, the Black Widow reduced a firm

sofa into pieces within one second!

They were unable to test out the Poison Attack. However, Qiao Qiao had the Black Widow exhibit the Binding Spider Web skill.

The Black Widow shot out its spider web at a coffee table approximately two metres in length. A white coloured mass of spider web sprayed out rapidly towards the coffee table, wrapping it up and turning it into a white coloured cocoon!

Chen Xiaolian moved forward to check it and found the spider web from the Black Widow to be very durable!

He tried to pull apart the spider web, but with his [B] Class strength, he was only barely able to do so! After pulling apart just a few strands, his palms felt a stinging pain.

“This is a very durable material,” Chen Xiaolian thought and suddenly suggested. “Let us not waste this spider web. It is a good item!”

Chen Xiaolian estimated that each strand of spider web was comparable to an iron wire! Additionally, it was softer!

Using hands to break iron wires was not hard for the average person. As long as one twisted it back and forth, metal fatigue will occur and the iron wire will break. However, pulling it alone will not lead to breakage.

However, this spider web was different! This spider web did not possess metal fatigue. No matter how one twisted it, the spider web would retain its softness! Furthermore, this spider web was lighter than iron wire.

“A good material such as this must be properly used,” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes shone. “If we use it to make into clothes, won’t it be better compared to the protective suits?”

“I fear it is not that simple,” Qiao Qiao’s face was somewhat pale.

She pointed to the Black Widow.

Clearly, after shooting out a large amount of spider web, the Black Widow appeared much weaker. It stayed immobile at its original spot lazily, as though it had consumed a great deal of its core energy.

“I can feel my Endurance getting drained at an extremely fast rate, so tired,” Qiao Qiao quickly sat down and took a deep breath. “A little dizzy, my body feels weak.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “As expected, drilling loopholes is not easy.”

The spider web was a good item, but there was no way to produce an unlimited amount of it.

After all, a pet’s skill will consume Endurance. Excessive usage of the pet would also drain the pet owner.

Qiao Qiao quickly summoned back the Black Widow, leaving the living room empty again. Chen Xiaolian looked at the spider web on the coffee table. He moved forward to help retrieve them. The three of them worked together, scrambling about for quite some time to that effect.

...

... ..

At the North District’s artificial beach.

The sun had already set and night fell.

Listening to the distant sound of waves and the cool breeze – despite knowing that all that was artificial, one would feel pleasant listening to it.

Roddy, Xia Xiaolei and the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were resting within an outdoor café situated on the beachside.

Comfortable beach chairs lay on the sand, and the patio umbrella had been kept. The four of them sat in a circle. As for Roddy, he languidly rested on the chair, a glass of Mojito cocktail in his right hand. A straw stuck out from the cocktail and Roddy narrowed his eyes, occasionally turning over to sip a mouthful from the straw before exhaling in a pleased tone.

“How delightful! Why isn’t Xiaolian here yet? It has been over half an hour.”

Roddy narrowed his eyes as he eyed the bikini-clad females walking through the beach.

“Roddy, I find you quite likeable, but your drinking choice is too feminine,” Lun Tai brought up a glass of whiskey and gulped down a mouthful. He frowned as he looked at Roddy’s cocktail, revealing an expression that one would show when suffering a toothache. “Only females would drink that weak stuff. Real men should be drinking hard liquor.”

“Hey, are you forgetting that I am only 18-years-old?” Roddy rolled his eyes. “A middle-aged uncle tricking an under aged into drinking hard liquor, what are you up to?”

Lun Tai stared. “Who are you calling middle-aged uncle? I just have an old face! I am in fact very young! I am only 28!”

“Cheh, I can’t communicate with you old people who are born in the 80s,” Roddy laughed.

Roddy turned his head around and extended his leg to kick Xia Xiaolei. “Xiaolei, what did you see to become so dazed?”

Xiaolei was staring at a nearby outdoor bar on the beachside. The bar separated into two, one selling liquor and the other was for barbeques.

Two convincing humanoid robots were busily operating the place. The androids that boasted a high sci-fi feeling were however, wearing straw hats and floral Hawaiian shirts, causing a disconnection in their image.

Xia Xiaolei’s face flushed. “I was looking at the androids, brother Roddy.”

“What is there to look? Haven’t you seen enough robots today?” Roddy muttered and turned his gaze towards the bar. Suddenly, his eyes flashed!

“Holy shit! Xiaolei, you dishonest fellow! You are obviously looking at beauties!”

Roddy quickly straightened his body and stared at the bar.

A slender figure sat beside the bar.

A tight sleeveless T-shirt clung tightly to her waist, revealing the outline of a slim and sturdy waist. Skin the colour of light wheat, exuding

a very healthy image.

Judging from the back view, this woman was definitely not a soft and weak female. She exhibited a tanned and muscular image, with a superbly explosive body! Under the T-shirt, a small part of her abdomen showed, revealing the faint outline of abdominal muscles.

Below her hot pants was a pair of long and alluring legs! Those legs were straight, strong and slender!

The most conspicuous aspect was her hair.

She was sporting a very rare medium length purple hair! She gave off a competent and beautiful image.

Although only part of her face was visible, the side outline of her face was enough to leave Roddy dazed!

“A beauty!” Roddy’s pair of eyes shone.

Beside him, Lun Tai looked over and laughed. “If you like her, then just go over and get acquainted with her.”

“This... would not stir up trouble, would it?” Roddy was hesitant, but his desire was obvious.

“Did you forget what I said? This artificial beach is called the ‘Sea of Love’, meant to let young Awakened ones like you find a partner,” Lun Tai drank a mouthful of liquor and laughed. “If you like her, then go try. If you do not, then someone else would certainly notice this top grade beauty. Do not regret it when that someone snatches her away.”

Roddy instantly held the cocktail and stood up. He stretched his neck. “Very well! I will go try!”

Chapter 107: Thorned Flower Guild

When Roddy reached the bar, the purple-haired girl was still coldly drinking liquor by herself.

Before her was a row of cups, her eyes showing slight intoxication. Even though Roddy was in front of her, she remained indifferent.

“Beautiful lady.”

Roddy placed one hand upon the bar counter and leaned over, trying his best to put on his most charming posture. “It is boring to drink alone. Let’s drink together.”

The purple-haired girl did not bother looking at him. She raised her cup and finished it in one gulp before slamming it down onto the table. After that, she licked the back of her hand.

Roddy noted that she had smeared some salt on the back of her hand.

That was the standard way of drinking tequila ...

“Tequila? It is rare to see a girl drinking such hard liquor,” Roddy blurted out. “How about I buy you a drink?”

The purple-haired girl tilted her head to the side to look at Roddy. Roddy noticed that this girl had a pair of extremely blue eyes. However, her appearance highly resembled an Asian American.

“Buy me a drink?” The purple-haired girl sneered, showing disdain. “I do not like a sissy who drinks cocktails.”

Roddy became embarrassed and he quickly placed down the cocktail onto the table before speaking in a loud voice. “I drink hard liquor as well. Come, I will buy you a drink.”

At that, he snapped his fingers. The android bartender in floral Hawaiian shirt came over and Roddy used a hundred US dollars to buy 2 cups of tequila.

The girl smiled with pursed lips as she picked up one cup, gulping it down in one go. Roddy gritted his teeth, picked up a cup and gulped it all

down in one go as well. Instantly, his face turned red.

“Finished drinking, now what?” The purple-haired girl revealed a pair of ridiculing eyes. “Are you just going to buy me one drink?”

“I will buy you as many drinks as you can take,” Roddy produced his wallet, pulling out a stack of US dollar bills and placing them on the table.

The liquor here was at least 3 times more expensive compared to the outside world. However, a rich kid like Roddy paid it no heed.

Soon, a bottle of tequila arrived on the surface of the bar counter.

The purple-haired girl sneered. She picked up the bottle and poured a cup for herself before looking at Roddy. Despite his low tolerance for alcohol, he too poured a cup for himself.

Next, the girl chose to say nothing. She slowly poured one cup after another without being hasty or slow.

Roddy noticed that the purple-haired girl's brows were revealing traces of worry.

“Beautiful lady, for you to be drinking alone, did something sad happen?” Roddy was on the verge of puking. He put down his cup and quietly sat down.

The purple-haired girl raised an eyebrow and suddenly turned to look at Roddy. “Are you thinking of wooing me?”

“... err...” Roddy was stunned, as he did not expect the girl to be so frank. Nonetheless, as a rich kid, he had quite some experience in picking up girls. He deliberately asked. “What if I say yes?”

“Interesting,” The purple-haired girl sneered. “I do not like sissies.”

“I am not a sissy. This brother is a pure man,” Roddy instantly puffed out his chest.

“I do not like weak men,” The purple-haired girl smirked.

“I... how am I weak?” Roddy deliberately let out a smile. “This brother is

very strong.”

He purposely emphasized the word ‘strong’.

The purple-haired girl smiled and she narrowed her eyes. “Oh? Then let’s try it out.”

After saying that, she suddenly cleared away the wine cups on the surface of the counter, creating an open space. Then, she placed her right arm onto the surface. “Let us test how strong you are.”

“Arm wrestle?” Roddy was stunned for a moment. Then, he smiled. “Are you joking?”

“If you don’t dare, take your wine and leave.”

“I dare! Why would I not dare!”

The inebriated Roddy instantly extended his hand outwards.

Unfortunately, he was forgetting about one critical issue.

This was not an ordinary bar.

This was Zero City!

Although Roddy had become an Irregularity, his body has not received adequate strengthening. Using the Beginner Strengthening Package , he was only barely able to strengthen his Physique somewhat.

In merely seconds...

Bang!

Roddy’s entire being, together with the chair he sat on, fell flat onto the ground!

The girl smiled as she retracted her hand. While remaining seated on the high chair, she lowered her head to look at Roddy. “Are you done proving yourself?”

Roddy’s face flushed and he suddenly bounced up. “Once more!”

The young master Roddy’s face showed that he was struggling.

However, a hand pressed down on his shoulder.

Roddy turned his head to see Chen Xiaolian, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo standing behind him.

“Roddy, forget it,” Chen Xiaolian held himself back from laughing.

Truthfully, he had arrived early on, but remained standing behind to watch the spectacle.

“I...” Roddy’s face was red.

“Just by looking at her, you can tell that she is a veteran. There is no shame in losing to her,” Chen Xiaolian waved his hand.

The purple-haired girl has jumped down from her chair. Despite her slender figure, she was not tall, only about 1.6 metres in height. She was a petite type of girl with a well-proportioned body.

“Very well, I thank you for the wine. I have had my fill, and I feel happy now. See you, then.”

The purple-haired girl spoke to Roddy with a smile. Then, without looking at Chen Xiaolian and the others, she moved away.

“Wait, wait!” Roddy suddenly shouted out.

“What is it?” The purple-haired girl asked indifferently. “Do you want to compete one more time?”

“En...” Roddy seemed somewhat hesitant. “Can you tell me... your name?”

The purple-haired girl smiled. “Why?”

“There is no why. I just want to know; I want to remember you,” Roddy spoke in a serious tone.

The purple-haired girl stared at Roddy for a few seconds. “My name is Nicole (nī kě).”

“Nicole, Nicole...” Roddy quietly repeated the name several times. Seeing as the girl was moving away, he immediately shouted. “Remember! My name is...”

“Your name is Roddy,” Nicole suddenly turned around, laughing as she

looked at Roddy. She revealed a peculiar smile. “18-years-old, you entered Zero City for the first time noon today. Your Entry Registration Number is L3755.”

Roddy, Chen Xiaolian and the others were dumbfounded!

“You, how did you know that?” Roddy was gaping.

“When you came in today, I was standing right by your side, cute little rookie.”

After saying that, Nicole turned around and left. This time, she did not look back.

Roddy stood there in a daze for several seconds before recovering!

“Holy shit! She is the Sentinel Mech’s pilot!” Roddy suddenly became excited. “I actually got to meet a Mech pilot! Heavens! The pilot is actually such a lovely beauty!”

Roddy suddenly turned to face the distant Nicole’s figure and used all his might to shout.

“Nicole! I will definitely woo you! You are my Goddess!”

...

Chen Xiaolian grabbed onto Roddy’s neck and pulled him back!

“Are you crazy? Shouting crazily before such a huge crowd; you make me want to bury my head in the sand!” Qiao Qiao delivered a kick to Roddy’s calf. “Following beside you makes me too embarrassed!”

Chen Xiaolian tilted his eyes. “You even went so far as to swear? Since that female is a Mech pilot, that means she is veteran member of Zero City. For a small rookie like you to set such an ambitious goal, you are bound for bitter times.”

“Hey, what do you know? This is my dream! As a gifted engineer, who is also a high-class Mech enthusiast, finding a girl who is of the same type, piloting Mechs to fight together and soar above the skies... an intimate and inseparable love. That is my ultimate goal!” Roddy’s eyes shone.

Chen Xiaolian looked at this fellow suffering from chuunibyou illness and sighed. He was very familiar with Roddy's character. Now was not the time to give him advice, any words spoken would not reach him.

"That girl is a Mech pilot from Zero City?" Lun Tai was also stunned. Then, he let out a bitter laugh. "Zero City's official members are not to be provoked. To be qualified to become a member of Zero City's official organization, a Mech pilot no less...that girl must certainly be a remarkable elite in technological abilities. Zero City's security personnel are filled with crouching tigers and hidden dragons. All of them are lead figures amongst Awakened ones."

"All right, let us talk about your afternoon stroll. Did you all get any good items?" Chen Xiaolian changed the subject.

Roddy became excited again. "Holy shit! That Military Arms Department is too amazing! You should have gone to take a good look! There are many types of Mechs in the exhibition hall! There are underground offensive types, defensive types, air and land, dual types... sigh! Unfortunately, we cannot approach and can only watch from outside the cordon line. Only one with the specific intention of purchasing would be allowed to go for a test drive."

"Test drive?" Chen Xiaolian glanced at Roddy.

"He cannot test drive," Lun Tai laughed. "He still does not have Mech piloting skills. There are two ways to acquire Mech piloting skills. The first is to purchase it from the Exchange System. Exchange out the relevant skills from the system. However, that method is more expensive, requiring several hundred points. The other method is cheaper. Apply to learn up on Mech control from the Military Arms Department in Zero City. You can learn using a simulator and they will even assign an instructor for you – however, we can forget about that method of learning. We have no qualification for permanent residence in Zero City. That method of learning is reserved for the permanent residents in Zero City."

Chen Xiaolian then asked. "How does one become a permanent resident?"

“Simple, make our guild into a top guild and apply for it from Zero City. If approved, we will become permanent residents... but you can forget about it. That matter is as difficult as ascending the Heavens,” Lun Tai laughed bitterly. “In the past few years, countless big guilds have attempted to do so only to return wounded.

“Moreover, the assessment is very strict. Besides the standard set by Zero City’s officials, the applying guild also needs the approval from half of the top guilds with permanent residence in Zero City. Only then can the guild qualify,” Lun Tai continued. “Thus, whenever other Awakened ones encounter members from the top guild with permanent residence in Zero City within instance dungeons, they will practice humility and choose to not make enemies of them.”

Roddy’s eyes suddenly lit up. “Then... if one could become a member of that top guild, will that person also become a permanent resident...”

Qiao Qiao quickly rapped his head. “Hey! You want to defect from our guild?”

Roddy cried out in pain and gripped his head. “I am just asking a casual question ah!”

“Occasionally, top guilds will conduct recruitments for members. However, their requirements are very strict...” After saying that, Lun Tai did not continue. He glanced at Roddy meaningfully: You are behind by tens of thousands of li (0.5 km).

“Also, not all recruited members will have the qualifications to permanent residence in Zero City. Only the main powerhouses of the guild will have qualifications to permanent residence,” Bei Tai added.

“Are there that many people in the top guilds? They could even separate into main and peripheral?” Roddy stared.

“Naturally, those guilds with the qualification to permanent residence in Zero City have a minimum member count of at least a hundred. I hear the biggest guild have a member count nearing a thousand.”

“... so many?”

“More members mean more resources,” Lun Tai sighed. “Just think about it, if a guild has several hundred veteran Awakened ones, when facing a difficult instance dungeon, they will have the assistance of many guild members, be it in the matter of collecting information or the preparation of various weapons and equipment. Additionally, there are many good items acquired from the instance dungeons. The guild would first exchange the items internally, leaving only items that they cannot use for sale. As a result, the strong guild will become even stronger and the gap between them and an ordinary guild grows even bigger.”

That night, the seven of them drank some liquor on the beach, ate a round of high-grade seafood flown in from who knew where before returning to the ‘Tourist Lodge’ to rest.

The night passed in silence.

The next morning, Chen Xiaolian joined the others to the South District’s business area. There, they strolled around the shops opened by the top guilds and Zero City’s officials.

The feeling that he got was: The good items here were indeed more numerous compared to the flea market!

However, the price... also seemed somewhat higher. The flea market allowed acts of haggling but these shops generally do not allow that. Naturally, there was also another type of shop known as the mortgage type, it allowed for the mortgage of some equipment or items for points. Like any pawnshop, if one did not redeem their items within the allocated time, then those items would no longer belong to that person.

Overall, it gave Chen Xiaolian a strange feeling: It was as though within this Zero City, the shops opened by both the Zero City officials and the top guilds... intentionally or not, they were mimicking the structure of the Exchange System.

They were doing their best to exhibit a very serious and formal feeling.

However... something did not feel right...

In the afternoon, Chen Xiaolian went to the flea market again.

He tried to test his luck, testing to see if he could find another feline type of pet like the Gryphon.

Unfortunately, after spending the entire afternoon strolling around, he ended up becoming disappointed.

However, that was not to say he did not acquire any harvest.

Unexpectedly, he managed to buy two 'Genetic Enhancement Serum' from a booth!

It came at a price of 100 points each.

This price was much cheaper than that of the Exchange System!

Chen Xiaolian had secretly inquired about it from Xia Xiaolei. The Genetic Enhancement Serum in the Exchange System required 250 points each. Even with Xia Xiaolei's discounting skill, the price would still be at 200 points each.

The booth owner from the flea market obviously did not purchase them from the Exchange System. According to him, he had acquired them from a certain instance dungeon. As he was unable to use them, he could only choose to sell them in the flea market.

This rare occurrence was one that depended on one's luck!

Chen Xiaolian quickly bought it up... any longer and it would be sold out. He intended to give them to Roddy and Xia Xiaolei.

As for Soo Soo... the little girl will still have to follow beside him.

...

Evening.

Tokyo, Senso-ji Temple.

A champagne coloured Bentley Continental slowly moved past an intersection before coming to a halt.

A tall, lean young man alighted from the opened car door. He wore a pure white trench coat, with blond hair as dazzling as the sun.

Upon his pale face were handsome facial features and eyes resembling

stars.

A thorned flower pattern adorned the sleeves of his trench coat!

The blond man's face revealed a faint smile as he slowly walked towards Senso-ji Temple.

...

Miao Yan stood below the famed 'Thunder Gate', adjusting her hands as she looked at the stars above the skies. Hearing footsteps, she lowered her head to check it. She observed as the blond man in white trench coat slowly walked through the long, still street. Buildings from the Edo era and green plants dotted the area around him.

This man approached step by step with a faint smile on his face and a majestic bearing!

"Miss Miao Yan?"

The blond man stood before her. "I am here as promised. How are you?"

Miao Yan narrowed her eyes. "You are?"

The blond man gave a light smile, his expression glowing like the stars!

His voice was calm and refined. "Thorned Flower Guild Leader, Augustine Chen (àogǔsīdīng chén)."

—

Nicole, raw: '妮可', pinyin: 'nī kě'.

Augustine Chen, raw: '奥古斯丁·辰', pinyin: 'àogǔsīdīng·chén'. He has a different surname from Chen (陈) Xiaolian. Augustine Chen's surname (辰) means 'day or time'.

1 Actually, the standard way of drinking tequila is actually to lick the salt first, then down the tequila. After that, bite into a slice of lime.
[Source: Wikihow].

2 The Beginner Strengthening Package is something that all Players & Awakened ones receive the first time they enter the instance dungeon as seen in .

Chapter 108: Unexpected

“Thorned Flower Guild...”

Miao Yan’s face turned extremely solemn and the indifferent expression on her face finally dissipated. She narrowed her eyes and stared at the man known as Chen. “Should I be feeling honoured? The infamous Thorned Flower Guild Leader is standing before me. I am curious though; with the strength that your guild has, was there any need to seek outside help?”

Chen maintained a calm and dashing smile. “No one person or organization is all-powerful. There will always be a weakness and an area where one has no expertise in.”

“What I am curious about is how you found me,” Miao Yan asked softly. “I am not a famous person within the circle of Players and those who know me are few in number.”

“There are special ways, aren’t there?” Chen smiled in a playful manner and winked. “Miss Miao Yan, you have an exalted Exclusive Account, in addition to having the highest supervisory authority. Those with such a high level of authority are far and few; I could probably count them all with one hand.”

Miao Yan’s face changed slightly. “You... could it be you have connections within the Development Team?”

Chen raised his head to look at the skies. Observing the stars in the night sky, he suddenly uttered out a laugh. “Enough. This is such a beautiful night; let us not waste it discussing this boring topic.”

“Then let us talk business,” Miao Yan said in a serious tone. “Did you bring what I want?”

Chen sighed. “Naturally.”

He raised his right hand and his sleeves fluttered. Next, a beam of light suddenly appeared before Miao Yan, suspended gently in place. Surprisingly, there was a golden seed within the light!

“World Tree...” Miao Yan stared at the glowing golden seed, seemingly in a daze. She then exhaled and muttered. “So, this thing really does exist.”

“It does not merely ‘exist’,” Chen said lightly. “Very well, I have shown my sincerity.”

“You will also get to see my sincerity,” Miao Yan said before pulling out a card from her pocket.

“This is?” Chen looked at the card within Miao Yan’s hand and frowned.

“Considering how big that item is, there is no way for me to take it with me, right? That is a coffin. Have you ever seen someone running through the street while carrying a coffin? Besides, I do not trust strangers,” Miao Yan replied with indifference. “I stored the item within a private warehouse in Tokyo Port Terminal. This card is the pass needed to unlock the warehouse. As for the address, it is at the back of the card.”

Chen’s pair of bluish sapphire eyes narrowed and he glanced at Miao Yan. The corners of his lips slowly turned up a little. He extended his hand to accept the card and pocketed it without examining it.

“... are you not afraid that I might be lying?” Miao Yan looked on blankly.

Chen gave an indifferent smile. “Since I have chosen to make this deal with you, I will trust you. Naturally, the one I trust more... is myself. The last time someone lied to me happened so long ago that I cannot even recall the appearance of that person.”

Miao Yan replied coldly. “Needless to say, that fellow’s ending must be excruciatingly horrible.”

“I have always been a fair person,” Chen gave a light smile. “If others show me sincerity, then I will reciprocate with sincerity as well. If others try to deceive me, well... the Thorned Flower Guild has thorns.”

Miao Yan stared at Chen for a long time before revealing a smile. “You are a very confident person. All right then, our transaction is complete and I have nothing else to talk about with you. Next time, do not come

looking for me. I do not like doing business with infamous guilds like yours. As for this time's middleman, I will no longer be in contact with him."

"That means there is no telling when we will meet again," Chen sighed.

Miao Yan extended her hand and gripped the suspended golden seed within her palm before keeping it into the system. Turning to regard Chen, Miao Yan knitted her eyebrows. "I am curious, what are you planning to do with Qin Shi Huang's coffin?"

"I do not mind answering that question," Chen replied indifferently. "Of course, that is if you are willing to tell me why you want to collect the seeds of the 'World Tree'..."

"... Forget it," Miao Yan pondered before shaking her head. "Truthfully, I am not that curious. Let us keep our respective secrets."

Watching Miao Yan moving away, Chen waited until she had taken a few steps before revealing a smile and calmly said. "There are seven seeds of the World Tree in total. Miss Miao Yan, do you not wish to know the whereabouts of the other seeds?"

"No," Miao Yan did not even bother to turn her head and waved her hand as she walked off. She replied loudly. "The price of doing business with people like you is too high. This time, for the sake of acquiring the coffin of Qin Shi Huang, I nearly lost my life. I will look for the seeds myself. Do not contact me again in the future!"

Observing Miao Yan leave through the intersection without turning back, Chen let out a soft sigh.

He raised his head and looked at the 'Thunder Gate' of Senso-ji Temple. Suddenly revealing a smile, he sat down on the platform.

Despite wearing an immaculate white coloured trench coat, he appeared nonchalant as he sat down before raising his head to gaze at the stars in the sky. After observing with amazement for a while, he gave out a bitter laugh. "Such a beautiful sky would cause anyone who looks at it for too long to get lost in its beauty."

After saying that, Chen shut his eyes and stood up. “Enough, a fake is a fake. No matter how beautiful it is, it is still illusory in the end.”

Chen walked out of Senso-ji Temple into the outer streets and the champagne coloured Bentley Continental slowly moved until it was beside him. Chen then got into the car.

“Go back home,” Chen leaned upon the seat and closed his eyes.

“Guild Leader,” The driver seated up front was a strapping middle-aged man. “Are we going back just like this? On the day after tomorrow, there will be an instance dungeon in Tokyo. Members of Team C have already arrived at Tokyo. Do you want to go receive them?”

“That is merely an [A] Class technological type instance dungeon,” Chen retrieved a wine glass from the car’s cabinet and poured himself a glass of whiskey. Sipping a mouthful, he then said indifferently. “I am not in the mood to deal with these small matters. You will stay behind and observe then. Team C has failed their quest once, right? If a problem crops up again this time, then there is no need for Team C to exist anymore.”

After saying that, he gently finished the glass of whiskey and closed his eyes, no longer saying anything.

...

... ..

They spent another day in Zero City.

Chen Xiaolian judged that it was time for them to leave. Zero City was indeed a good place; the high quality equipment and goods sold in the flea market and business district were simply dazzling.

Even so... they do not have enough points on them. The points that they have were not considerable and the 1,000 points that Chen Xiaolian has were simply insufficient to buy anything.

Rather than watch on with envy, they might as well leave.

However, Roddy’s chuunibyou illness flared up and he shamelessly

begged Chen Xiaolian to stay for another day.

He said that he wanted to go to the Military Arms Department to look at the Mechs and various other weapons of the technological type.

Truthfully, both Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao were able to see through his mind easily – this fellow wanted to go to the outdoor bar and café in the evening to test his luck, he wanted to see if he could meet the pilot known as Nicole again.

Since there was nothing important going on, they acquiesced with this fellow's request to satisfy him this one time.

Everyone stayed in Zero City for one more day. On the third day, they left together.

They checked out of the 'Tourist Lodge' and walked non-stop until they reached the central plaza. As they were passing through the beach area of the Sea of Love, that buffoon, Roddy kept turning his head to stare incessantly at the area – last night, he sat at the bar situated in the Sea of Love until daybreak, but was unable to meet the purple-haired girl, Nicole again.

After arriving at the central plaza, they entered the teleportation gate and were instantly teleported to the rooftop of a big building.

They found that the receptionist for this big building's rooftop was different. Furthermore... the matter that surprised them was the apparent increase in security on the rooftop. There were actually four Sentinel Mechs standing in the vicinity!

There were also two Awakened ones wearing protective suit, standing behind the table.

"This is the public Entrance and Exit Gate. Are you planning to leave?"

An unfamiliar receptionist came over and smiled. "You may take the elevator to leave. At the same time, I must remind you all: Once you walk out of the elevator, Zero City's period of opening will end for all of you. If you want to return to Zero City after that, you will have to wait until the next opening period to enter. Are you all certain that you want to leave?"

“Certain,” Qiao Qiao said loudly and slapped Roddy in the head – that fellow has been staring at the surrounding Mechs, staring at their cockpits... unfortunately, even though the cockpits were transparent, the pilots inside were all wearing helmets and thick protective suits. Forget recognizing their appearance, even identifying their gender would be impossible.

“In that case, goodbye,” The receptionist gave a light smile.

Chen Xiaolian pulled Roddy as they left but this buffoon suddenly extricated himself from Chen Xiaolian’s hand. Roddy turned around to face the Mechs and shouted:

“Nicole, maybe you are here! Maybe you are not! If that is the case, I beseech of these pilots to send my message to her! Please tell her, I, Roddy will definitely succeed in wooing her!”

Hearing those words, the receptionist and even the two grim looking Awakened ones behind the table, they who were obviously part of the security personnel were stunned.

The receptionist and the two Awakened ones could not restrain themselves and they laughed out. One of them stared at Roddy. “Where did this idiotic kid come from? Hahaha! I am about to die of laughter!”

“Idiot!” Qiao Qiao viciously struck Roddy on his head. Roddy gripped his head in pain and dared not fight back. However, he kept his attention directed at the Sentinel Mechs in the vicinity before Chen Xiaolian dragged him into the elevator.

Once the elevator doors closed...

“Hahahahahahaha!!”

The Mech on the left side suddenly erupted with gleeful laughter. Even though his voice was electronically synthesized, the Mech he was in appeared unable to stand steady from his laughter. One could imagine how much the pilot inside was laughing.

“Nicole! Hahahaha! Nicole, you have another infatuated fan! Hahahahahahaha! What a courageous youngster!”

“A courageous kid! I will bet 50 points on his success!”

“I will bet 100 points, that idiotic kid is dead for sure! Hahaha!”

Three of the Mechs burst out in a frenzy of laughter.

Then...

The fourth Mech that had been remaining silent suddenly raised a foot to kick down the Mech that was laughing the hardest!

“Is it that funny?”

Despite the electronically synthesized voice, if Roddy were here, he would have recognized that tone – that was Nicole!

Nicole was actually present amongst the four Mechs!

Nicole sat in the cockpit, clenching her fists and gritting her teeth. Her face was red as she fiercely said. “If anyone dares to laugh again, when we get back, I will break that person’s leg!”

...

“Being with you is simply too embarrassing,” Qiao Qiao sighed as she kicked Roddy out of the elevator.

The outside area of the elevator was not the big business building that they had entered through, instead...

It was a bustling shopping mall!

The outside of the elevator led to the first floor of the shopping mall. The malls there were crowded and bustling with activity.

They looked at each other. Lun Tai though, remained calm. “This is very normal. Sometimes, the exit passage is not the same as the entrance passage. Perhaps it is for the sake of confidentiality. Let us leave this place.”

Walking out of the elevator, they realized that this place was actually the most bustling spot in Tokyo – Ginza!

“Let us call a cab and return to the hotel,” Qiao Qiao thought about it before smiling. “Or we can just go back to the airport. I can book the

tickets while we are on the way there. Or I can get my old man's airplane to come fetch us."

Chen Xiaolian deliberated the matter. "Return to the hotel."

Qiao Qiao narrowed her eyes. "Could you be thinking of searching for the woman known as Miao Yan?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao. He extended his hand to feel her hair and smiled gently. "Jealous?"

"I..." Qiao Qiao blushed. Then, she snorted. "I am not!"

"So what if you are jealous? Why deny it?" Chen Xiaolian's fingers reached Qiao Qiao's ears and he gently pinched them. "Seeing you becoming jealous because of me makes me very happy."

Seeing the furious expression on Qiao Qiao's face caused the rest of them to turn their heads away.

Qiao Qiao snorted and proceeded to call a cab.

Roddy pointed to a random café in the shopping mall and suggested that they go in for a while.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian's face suddenly changed!

"Eh?"

Chen Xiaolian's face suddenly turned pale as he gaped at the sight before him... however, it was clear that his eyes were not focused on anything!

"What is it?" Qiao Qiao knitted her eyebrows and pulled Chen Xiaolian's arm.

Chen Xiaolian's face was a mask of helplessness and confusion. However, there was mostly rage!

"Bloody Hell! ... The Guild System has suddenly received... an instance dungeon notification!"

"Instance dungeon notification?"

Roddy, Xia Xiaolei, Lun Tai and Bei Tai convened around him, their

faces turning grim.

With an expression of absurdity, Chen Xiaolian directly used the guild channel to share out the system prompt.

[System: Please note, instance dungeon numbered G576 is about to begin. To the selected Players and guild members, please arrive at the designated area within the specified time period. Those who fail to arrive at the designated area will be forcibly exterminated! This instance dungeon's area: Japan, Tokyo City. The official administrative jurisdiction of the instance dungeon area will overrule others].

[System: To the Players and guild members not selected by this instance dungeon, please leave the instance dungeon area before the instance dungeon opens. If you remain within the instance dungeon area, you will automatically become a participant of the instance dungeon].

[Prompt: Your guild was not selected to participate in this instance dungeon, but your guild is still within the instance dungeon area. Please leave the instance dungeon area before the countdown ends. Countdown: 26 minutes 38 seconds (the numbers kept changing)].

“What is going on here?”

Chapter 109: Tokyo Instance Dungeon

“Bloody... Hell! What is going on?” Chen Xiaolian was unable to stop himself from cursing out. “F**k!”

Everyone’s faces were of bewilderment. Lun Tai on the other hand, revealed a grim expression. Gritting his teeth, he let out a sigh. “This is just bad luck on our part.”

“What did you say?”

“This is a normal instance dungeon notification and we were not selected by the instance dungeon... unexpectedly, this time’s instance dungeon area is Tokyo. Additionally, judging by the contents of the notification, the entirety of Tokyo City will become an instance dungeon area.

“Conventionally speaking, if those who are not selected to participate in this instance dungeon happen to be in the area, they will be given an advance notice by the system, allowing those people sufficient time to leave the instance dungeon area. The people selected for this instance dungeon will also be given sufficient time to arrive at the instance dungeon area – take our last instance dungeon, the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang instance dungeon for instance, we were notified 48 hours ahead.”

“That is right!” Chen Xiaolian was furious. “But now, there is only twenty something minutes left in the countdown! What is going on here?”

“... because, we were previously within Zero City,” Lun Tai sighed. “There is a very important reason as to why Zero City is deemed as the safest place in the world of Awakened ones... as long as one stays in Zero City, one would be able to escape being selected by the instance dungeon! Simply put, it would be as though the system’s selection ability is blocked. All instance dungeon notifications are also blocked.

“Therefore, when we were inside Zero City, we were unable to receive the system’s instance dungeon notification.

“By the time we come out, a great deal of time has passed and only a

small amount of time remains.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face distorted as he raised his head to look at Lun Tai.
“In other words...”

“This is just bad luck on our part,” Lun Tai bore a complicated expression. “If we had spent just another half hour within Zero City, the instance dungeon would have begun and we would have escaped from this calamity. On the other hand, if we had emerged a few hours in advance, we would have sufficient time to leave Tokyo City. As long as we reach the outer area of Tokyo City, we would have escaped as well.

“But now...”

Lun Tai bore a very bitter smile.

27 minutes... to run out from Ginza, the most bustling central commercial area in Tokyo all the way to the outer area of Tokyo City... in 27 minutes! That was simply impossible!

“We won’t make it using the subway, using a car is not even worth thinking about. It is currently 4.30 pm, very close to peak hour,” Bei Tai suddenly spoke out. “Unless we have a helicopter, that way we might actually be able to escape from the city.”

“Where are we going to find a helicopter?” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “Even if there is a helicopter in Tokyo City, twenty something minutes may not be enough for us to snatch the helicopter.”

Pa!

Roddy who was standing to the side suddenly slapped himself violently across his cheek! He executed the slap with extreme strength and ruthlessness! Several fingerprint marks appeared on his face.

“It is all my fault!” Roddy’s face filled with remorse. “If I had not forced everyone to stay in Zero City for one more day...”

After saying that, his hand turned over to deliver another slap onto his cheek!

“Enough!”

Chen Xiaolian grabbed onto Roddy's wrist, preventing him from slapping himself.

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and forced himself to calm down. "There is still... 25 minutes left! Now is not the time to feel guilty or hold anyone accountable. Within 25 minutes time, the instance dungeon will open; the instance dungeon is the entire Tokyo City... we should not be discussing about useless matters now. Concentrate and discuss about how to get through this instance dungeon!"

"Is there a quest description?" Qiao Qiao furrowed her eyebrows.

"No," Chen Xiaolian's face turned gloomy. "Because we were not normally selected, there are no explanations regarding the instance dungeon at all!"

"Indeed, the system will notify us stray players to leave before the specified time. Only if we did not leave before the specified time is up will the system will give a detailed explanation to us when the instance dungeon opens," Lun Tai forced out a smile.

"In other words, we currently know nothing about this instance dungeon, the quest, storyline, requirements, restrictions... we know pretty much nothing!" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "Anyone have any suggestions?" He turned to look at Lun Tai. After all, their guild mainly consisted of rookies. The ones with the most experience were the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai.

"In my opinion... in situations where we do not have any information, ensuring our own safety takes precedence. We must first create a safe house for ourselves! No matter what, we need to find a place with walls that are sufficiently thick, making a base for ourselves! In case danger arises, we would at least have a place we can mount our defence from."

"Why? Could it be... would the system do the same thing as the movies, turning everyone in Tokyo into zombies?" Roddy gasped.

Xia Xiaolei blinked. "Brother Roddy, what kind of thing is a zombie?"

Lun Tai gave out a "pei". "What is so great about zombies? No one can

guess how creative the system can get. Forget zombies, I would not be surprised even if everyone in Tokyo is transformed into Smurfs.”

“Enough, let us begin! First, find a safe house just in case. Heaven knows what kind of instance dungeon the system will play out. In case the script follows Resident Evil and turns everyone in the city into zombies, this last 20 minutes of preparation becomes extremely crucial! Move out!”

Chen Xiaolian immediately exerted his authority as the Guild Leader. Lun Tai and Bei Tai revealed their agreement towards his decision while the others followed suit.

They quickly left the café and ran into the street.

It was past four o'clock in the afternoon and the streets of Ginza bustled with pedestrians. The pedestrians walked through the streets of Tokyo at a rapid pace, the crowds moving like torrents. Their group ran through the crowd of pedestrians with the strongest amongst them, Lun Tai in the front, responsible for making a path.

After moving out of an intersection, Chen Xiaolian checked his watch and saw that less than five minutes has passed.

At that moment, they sighted a hotel across the street. Judging by its luxurious image, it must be around 5-stars. At the very least, it would surely not be below 4-stars. As for its name, it was in English and Chen Xiaolian had no time to make it out.

“Go there!” Chen Xiaolian pointed across the street. “We will separate! Lun Tai, Bei Tai, you two take Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo to the hotel. Forget checking in. Just go directly to the highest floor, find a room with thick walls and doors and barge in! Occupy a favourable position!”

“What about you?” Qiao Qiao frowned.

Chen Xiaolian pointed to a convenience store not far away from the intersection. “I will bring Roddy and Xia Xiaolei to buy some stuff. Heaven knows what kind of situation will occur. We must first prepare some food and water.”

Seeing Qiao Qiao wanting to say something, Chen Xiaolian said grimly.

“Do not argue! Make use of this time! Hurry! We will meet up with you on the highest floor of the hotel later! There is still 20 minutes left! Hurry hurry hurry!”

Qiao Qiao bit her lips and maintained her silence, pulling Soo Soo with her as she followed Lun Tai and Bei Tai, charging through the road heading towards the hotel.

“We need to hurry as well! Go!”

Chen Xiaolian led Roddy and Xia Xiaolei to a 7-11 convenience store by the intersection. Rushing into the store, they ran towards the food area.

“Do not take beverages! Take more mineral water!” Seeing Xia Xiaolei holding onto a dozen Cokes, Roddy shouted out hastily. “Throw away all fruit juices and carbonated drinks! Take only mineral water!”

Chen Xiaolian ran to the deli counter. He ignored the brands and took everything that was vacuum-sealed. At the same time, he shouted to Roddy. “Roddy! Get more chocolates and energy bars! Try your best to find those high in calories!”

“Understood!” Roddy quickly stuffed the items into the basket.

As Chen Xiaolian was moving past the area for daily appliances, he thought for a moment. Seeing that there were a few kitchen knives, he swept them into the basket that he was holding as well.

“Think, think, what else, what else...” Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the clock on the walls, doing all he can to remain calm. Then, he slapped his head. “Battery!”

He rushed to the front counter and grabbed a handful of varying batteries, throwing them into the basket.

There were people queuing at the checkout counter. However, Chen Xiaolian was unable to care about it at this point. Chen Xiaolian directly rushed over, pushing others aside, ignoring the complaints and lectures of the other customers. Once Roddy and Xia Xiaolei ran over, he pulled out a stack of US dollar bills from his wallet and threw it onto the surface of the counter without even looking how much there was. The three of them

did not even bother returning the store's basket as they held onto it and ran madly out of the store. The staff member of the store chased after them while shouting. However, the three of them have had their bodies strengthened; even Roddy and Xia Xiaolei had acquired the Genetic Enhancement Serum that Chen Xiaolian bought in Zero City, giving their bodies [B] Class attributes. How was an ordinary staff member of the store supposed to stop them?

Carrying the baskets, they ran through the rapid flowing traffic. Then, they jumped over a fence and continued running towards the hotel, running inside.

After bursting into the hotel, they quickly ran into the elevator. Chen Xiaolian did not forget to grab a map of Tokyo City from the hotel's common area and stuffed it into his pocket.

After using the elevator to reach the highest floor, they walked out to find Qiao Qiao waiting for them.

"The room?"

"We got it! It is the innermost one. Additionally, it is close to the fire escape. That room was picked by Lun Tai," Qiao Qiao led the three of them and they ran to the end of the corridor.

After they ran into the room, they slammed the door shut...

[Prompt: Your guild was not selected to participate in this instance dungeon, but your guild is still within the instance dungeon area. Please leave the instance dungeon area before the countdown ends. Countdown: 00 minutes 08 seconds (the numbers kept changing)].

...

[System: Instance dungeon numbered G576 has opened! The selected guild members and individuals who failed to arrive at the instance dungeon area will be immediately exterminated! Those guild members and individuals who failed to leave the instance dungeon area before the specified time are now automatically participants in this instance dungeon].

[Prompt: Your guild failed to leave the instance dungeon area within the specified time and have been determined as participants of this instance dungeon. Please check the relevant information about this instance dungeon. Branch quest will be randomly distributed later. Please take note].

Everyone within the room turned to look at one another.

“What is a branch quest?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

Lun Tai opened his mouth, but before he could say anything, suddenly...

They heard a burst of thunderous boom!

In the next instant, the entire room swayed lightly for a while! Thunderous rumbling sounds reverberated in from the outside.

Their faces changed and they moved as one towards the nearby window.

A distance away from the window, a mass of flames suddenly appeared in an unknown part of Tokyo City and dense smoke billowed up to the skies! A series of explosion erupted continuously and sounds of confusion from the streets gradually increased. The rumblings of explosions and the quaking of the earth...

“Earthquake? Terrorist attack? Or did the gas pipeline explode?”

[Prompt: Instance dungeon has opened; issuing first phase of the quest...]

Boom!

A loud peal resonated towards them from outside the windows once again! A gigantic black coloured mushroom cloud rose up to the skies! Three kilometres away, a huge building that was within the mushroom cloud collapsed!

“Holy shit! Did a war break out?” Roddy stared with wide-open eyes.

“Who cares, it is fine as long as it is not a nuclear bomb,” Lun Tai was able to stay fairly calm. “It should not be a nuclear bomb. If it is, then there is no point in having an instance dungeon. All the Awakened ones and Players in Tokyo will die. Wait for the system to issue out the quest,

son of a bitch... I feel that this situation might be somewhat worse than we had expected.”

“Will we be safe here? What do we do if there is an earthquake?” Xia Xiaolei was at a loss.

“Be rest assured, this is Japan. Japan faces earthquakes on a constant basis. Thus, they will give attention to earthquake resistance when the buildings here are constructed. Normal earthquakes will not be a problem,” Chen Xiaolian comforted Xia Xiaolei and sat on the sofa. He began to inspect the information received by the guild system regarding this instance dungeon...

After glancing through it, Chen Xiaolian’s face changed and he was unable to restrain himself from cursing out. “Damn it!”

“What is it?” Roddy quickly asked. “Could it be that everyone in the city has turned into zombies? Just like Resident Evil?”

“... no,” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth before smiling bitterly. “Worse!”

...

Chapter 110: Fiery Tokyo

The expression on Chen Xiaolian's face was very strange.

Suddenly, a beam of light appeared within the room. From within the light, a square metal block appeared, falling down onto the floor. It quickly dissolved and melded onto the floor.

Next, everyone in the guild received the instance dungeon's information that Chen Xiaolian shared out.

[Tokyo instance dungeon

Back story: A secret government-affiliated institution dedicated to the research and development of highly technological products is, due to an unknown cause, suffering from an accidental leakage.

First phase of the quest: All participating Players and team members will receive one of the mysterious institution's energy sources.

Players must think of methods to snatch other Players energy source and gather up five energy sources. This will reveal the position of the mysterious institution and grant the permission to enter.

Each party's energy source will appear once the instance dungeon opens. After the energy source appears, the respective party will not be able to move their respective energy source. In order to snatch the energy source of another party, you must kill all members of the opposing party within 10 metres of the energy source or drive them 10 metres away from the energy source. After that, the opposing party's energy source becomes moveable.

The system will randomly display the location of one other party's energy source on the radar of each team or individual Players. After successfully snatching the other party's energy source, the system will display the location of another random energy source.

This phase has a 24-hour limit. The team or individual Player who cannot gather five energy sources within 24 hours will have failed the quest.

If one party's energy source was snatched away, that party must snatch back their energy source within the countdown of 24 hours. Otherwise, no matter how many energy sources of other parties they acquire, that party will have failed the quest.

Those who failed the quest will be subjected to one system punishment.

In view of the circumstances of this quest, all Players radar will be temporarily unusable. Radar will not reveal the location of other Players].

...

The 24-hour countdown has begun!

Observing the red digital figures ticking away, everyone's heart grew heavy.

"Do you all understand the quest?" Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. "It is not that hard to understand. The metal block that appeared in this room is the energy source distributed to us. First, we cannot move it. Second, we cannot allow others to snatch it away. Third, we need to go snatch the energy sources belonging to others and gather up five of them."

"Understood," Lun Tai was the first to speak up. "Son of a bitch, this quest is really shitty."

It really is shitty.

The most crucial factor was: [C. The system will randomly display the location of one other party's energy source on the radar of each team or individual Players. After successfully snatching the other party's energy source, the system will display the location of another random energy source].

This one was truly a shitty condition!

According to the prompt, all teams and individual Players will receive an energy source. However, if you want to snatch the energy source of others, you face a big problem: finding the location of the other party's energy source!

However, the system will only display to you one... at random!

You will need to succeed in snatching the first one before the system would reveal the location of the second one...

As for the identity of the owner of the displayed energy source, that would depend on your luck!

If you were lucky, the energy source displayed would belong to a minor rookie Player. Under such circumstances, snatching the energy source would not be too difficult.

However, if you were unlucky, and the energy source displayed actually belongs to a High-Class Player's guild... you going in there to snatch the energy source would be the equivalent of committing suicide!

In other words, you have no choice!

If the system randomly assigns you to snatch that one, then you will have to go snatch that one!

"Unless we have Heavenly defying luck, and could simply walk around without the radar and encounter a rookie guarding an energy source... but, that is basically impossible, no different from winning the lottery," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile.

"Additionally, we will need to separate," Lun Tai said in a low voice. "Our energy source cannot be moved, but we need to go snatch from others... we can only act separately. Someone needs to stay behind to protect the energy source. At the same time, we need to send someone out to snatch from others."

Chen Xiaolian quickly shared out the radar display issued by the system.

The map shown was clearly a map of Tokyo that could be enlarged and shrunk. Upon the map was a flashing golden light.

"This is the location of the other party's energy source that the system has randomly assigned to us," Chen Xiaolian said softly. "It is a few kilometres away."

After saying that, he picked up a bottle of mineral water, unscrewed it

and gulped down the entire bottle's worth of water. He violently threw the bottle away and lashed out. "This quest is too shitty! I feel that an even worse scenario might happen; the same target might be displayed to more than one team or players. That could complicate matters, causing more problems for both the defenders and the snatchers.

"Thus, this damnable first phase is meant to let all the Players and Awakened ones kill each other."

"There is no use complaining, that has always been the way the system works," Lun Tai said lightly. "You need to make the decision. You are the Guild Leader."

"... phew!" Chen Xiaolian exhaled deeply and he kneaded his face forcefully. A few seconds later, he collected himself.

"All right! Now we need to decide on splitting our members! We will split into two teams; the first team stay here while the other team will move out to snatch the energy source.

"I have decided that team that will stay behind will be led by Lun Tai, responsible for protecting our energy source. Members in this team: Lun Tai, Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo and Xia Xiaolei.

"As for the others, Bei Tai, Roddy and me, we will be responsible for snatching the energy source!"

Qiao Qiao could not resist opening up her mouth. "I..."

Clearly, Qiao Qiao wanted to go together with Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian's face was solemn. "Do as I say! Qiao Qiao! Lun Tai is the only main powerhouse within the defence team. Xia Xiaolei's ability is of the support type and is not suitable for battles. As for Soo Soo, she is a little girl! If I am to change you with others, will you be able to feel at ease leaving Soo Soo out of your sight?"

"... .." Qiao Qiao was silent.

Chen Xiaolian had made his own considerations regarding the team selections. The outer team will definitely face more danger compared to

the defence team. Thus, he made a selfish decision to have Soo Soo left behind. As for Xia Xiaolei, he was unsuitable for battle. However, his Hagglng skill will be very useful for the future development of the guild. That was why he has to stay behind as well.

At this moment, his small guild's weakness has been exposed... the lack of battle power!

Lun Tai and Bei Tai were the only veterans in his guild. Perhaps he could qualify as a strong guild member as well. After all, he possessed the strengthened Garfield and Bai Qi!

As for Qiao Qiao and Roddy, they were both rookies. They still needed to grow through actual combat.

However, if he took both Qiao Qiao and Roddy out and others were left behind, neither Qiao Qiao nor Chen Xiaolian would be at ease leaving Soo Soo to others. After all, Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Xia Xiaolei were recent acquaintances. This was especially true of the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai. To put it bluntly, they simply share the same interest, but do not have any feelings towards one another.

"Then it is decided," Lun Tai nodded his head, seemingly indifferent to the idea of having to split up with his brother.

This caused Chen Xiaolian to see him in a different light.

However, Lun Tai then turned to look at Chen Xiaolian and added seriously. "My little brother is a muddle-headed fellow. I hope you do not make use of that and turn him into cannon fodder! If you do that..."

Lun Tai did not continue with the harsh parts, however, his eyes have revealed everything!

Chen Xiaolian looked at him and said solemnly, "Be rest assured, I will prove to you that joining our guild is not a mistake."

"Stay alive and complete this instance dungeon. If you can back up your words, I will apologize to you and recognize you as a real Guild Leader."

...

Before leaving, Chen Xiaolian left a few words for the defence team. “If someone comes to snatch, fight back if possible. If it is not possible... if things look impossible, then withdraw! Preserving our lives is more important!”

Lun Tai considered it and agreed.

Subsequently, this veteran Awakened used a very serious tone of voice to advise Chen Xiaolian.

“You are a decent person. However, you have a problem; you are too soft-hearted! You must understand, what we are going through now is a merciless game! I will give you this advice: when inside an instance dungeon, learn to be more cruel! Maximize what you can use from the surrounding environment and conditions! For example, now, the entirety of Tokyo has been transformed into an instance dungeon area. According to the system rules, even if you go out and level the entire Tokyo City, kill off everyone in Tokyo City... once the instance dungeon is completed, the system will refresh it and everything will be restored to its original state.

“What I mean to say is, when you go out, do not get soft-hearted, do not hesitate! When it is time to kill, kill! When it is time to do something, you do it! Perhaps, to the Players, we are the NPCs.

“However, at this moment, in this instance dungeon, those people out in the streets are also NPCs to us!

“If I were you, if I were to locate the target energy source, I will ignore everything else and launch a rocket launcher over, flattening the entire street. Even if it means killing both the opposing team and a street full of ordinary people, I will not hesitate – assuming I have a rocket launcher, of course!

“Remember! You have to be cruel!”

...

Chen Xiaolian, Bei Tai and Roddy left the hotel and went outside.

The street was currently in chaos. Even though the explosion occurred some distance away, the ensuing chaos was very big.

The pedestrians on the street have fled in the other direction. Police cars came one after another, stopping by the road while police officers jumped out from their cars to maintain order in the street and disperse the crowd.

There were also several fire trucks issuing sharp siren sounds as they drove bravely towards the area that was releasing dense billowing smoke.

Chen Xiaolian checked the map as he ran, then he raised his head and looked at situation of the road. "We need a car!"

"There!" Bei Tai pointed towards a police car parked by the road. There were two police officers in the middle of dispersing the crowd some tens of metres away.

Chen Xiaolian inhaled vigorously and reminded himself. "This is just an instance dungeon area, just an instance dungeon period... after this, everything will be refreshed!"

He led the other two with him and they ran towards the police car. He directly entered the driver's seat while Bei Tai took the first passenger's seat. As for Roddy, he sat in the back row.

Banging the door shut, Chen Xiaolian saw that the car keys were still there. He did not hesitate and moved to start the car, shift the gear and step on the pedal!

A roar resounded and the car charged into the street like a wild animal!

The police officers who were maintaining order behind the intersection became shocked. They shouted and chased madly after the car for tens of metres before raising their walkie-talkie and yelling into it.

Chen Xiaolian fiercely turned the steering wheel and the car swerved past an intersection. He saw that the road before them was blocked; a roadblock rested in the middle of the road. Several Japanese police officers stood on the road, desperately waving towards the car that was moving towards them.

Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth hard and stamped down heavily onto the throttle, pushing it down to its maximum limit!

A “boom” resounded as several police officers scattered and the plastic barricades were knocked out of the way. The car continued speeding off...

“Son of a bitch! The system better be able to refresh this! Otherwise, even if we manage to live through this instance dungeon, the Japanese police will turn us into wanted men!” A frustrated expression covered Chen Xiaolian’s face as he shouted.

Bei Tai and Roddy on the other hand shouted out loudly in unison. “Too cool!”

“Don’t shout!” With one hand holding onto the wheel, Chen Xiaolian threw the map to the side using his other hand. “Hurry up and check the map! I will drive, you guys help check the map! Hurry!”

After a moment, Roddy held onto the map and shouted out. “I have identified the address, Tokyo City, Chiyoda Ward, Kasumigaseki... eh? What the son of a bitch place is this?”

“What is wrong?” Chen Xiaolian charged through another intersection while madly turning the steering wheel. At that moment, shrill siren sounds could be heard coming from behind them as several police cars rapidly caught up to them.

“Son of a bitch, are you sure the location of the energy source displayed by the system is correct?”

“I am sure! What is the problem? What is it?” Chen Xiaolian madly turned into a narrow road. The road was clearly a one-way road, but they barrelled their way through at breakneck speed, causing the pedestrians on both sides of the road to scream out one after another, dodging towards the side. On the way, Chen Xiaolian sent several garbage cans flying. There was also a billboard – upon the billboard was the image of Aragaki Yui smiling sweetly while wearing swimwear. The car directly smashed through it!

A “boom” resonated outwards and the car trembled. Chen Xiaolian exerted his all to control the steering wheel. Glancing back, he observed the billboard that fell behind and saw that Aragaki Yui’s head on the board had disappeared. He became enraged and shouted. “Roddy speak

up! What is going on?”

“According to the map, that location seems like... Japan’s Metropolitan Police Department...”

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly. “DAMN IT!”

—

1 Aragaki Yui is a rather famous and very beautiful (personal opinion) Japanese actress.

Chapter 111: Braving the Metropolitan Police Department

The number of police cars chasing them increased. They frantically issued warnings through their loudspeakers, ordering Chen Xiaolian to stop the car. Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and stamped heavily onto the throttle, sending the car barrelling away.

The police cars behind attempted to overtake them, but Chen Xiaolian summoned out his Need for Speed's gaming spirit, abruptly rushing left and right, colliding with them again and again. After a few collisions, the car had become a wreck with the doors on both sides dented inwards.

"Japan police cars are quite durable," Chen Xiaolian was able to calm down and was no longer as nervous as he was before.

Their car travelled through the road in an S line. The police cars behind them attempted to overtake them several times, but were stopped by Chen Xiaolian each time. One of the police cars lost control and collided into a shop. The signboard of the shop read [Victoria's Secret]. The portrait of Miranda Kerr wearing a sensual pair of lingerie on the door propelled outwards due to the collision...

"It is all right! The Japanese traffic police and ordinary police do not carry firearms. If we are in the US, the police would have opened fire by now," Roddy rolled down the windows, allowing the wind to blow inside before extending his hand out as he shoved the middle finger towards the back!

"Haha! They do not have guns? I do!"

Bei Tai held out both hands as he summoned out an M16 automatic assault rifle from the system! Thankfully, it has a folding stock (butt). Otherwise, it would have poked Chen Xiaolian's face!

Bei Tai howled madly and pushed out half his body out the window. Next, the sound of "chug chug chug chug chug" rang out!

The police car closest to them was shot to the point of releasing sparks

everywhere. Then, it staggered into a streetlight by the road! As for the second closest police car, its hood has begun to release flames. With a bang, its hood burst out and the car flew, rolling over in the process!

Chen Xiaolian's mind was a mess: Son of a bitch! What kind of members have I gotten?

"Bei Tai! Where did you get that gun?"

"Rookie Guild Leader, you must have never participated in an Afghanistan instance dungeon, hahahaha!" Bei Tai laughed madly and he suddenly produced several egg-shaped...

"Damn! You even have grenades?"

"Tactical defence grenade," Bei Tai laughed. He pulled out the rings and threw them to the back...

A series of explosions rang out from behind them. Chen Xiaolian looked at the back view mirror and saw the streets of Tokyo in utter mess...

...

Tokyo Tower.

High up in the skies, a black figure was suspended amidst the layer of clouds. Both his hands spread out and he wore a big pair of smart goggles on his face. The left side connected to a headset and various data unfolded on the surface of the goggles.

"Falcon reporting on the latest data. I am receiving data from all 389 receivers normally. The entire region is under our monitoring. I have sent over the six most suspected target positions," The man in black spoke in a very low tone.

A deep voice came from the headset.

"Falcon, continue monitoring."

"Affirmative, Team Leader. I wish everyone success."

Within a warehouse of a big commercial building in the central area, a beefy figure with a bodybuilder's physique sneered as he turned off the

walkie-talkie and forcefully tugged his protective suit.

Inside the room stood seven to eight team members, each wearing a full set of highly sci-fi combat suit.

“Well then, are you all ready? From this moment onwards, this city will become our playground! Vent as much as you want!” After he finished speaking, the beefy figure shouted. “Long live Thorned Flower!”

“Long live Thorned Flower!”

After shouting loudly, all of them put on a circular shaped helmet.

The muscular beefy figure walked to the side of an immense object covered in black tarpaulin. He then pulled away the tarpaulin!

A tank with a domineering appearance, filled with a sci-fi feeling was unveiled before everyone!

“Move! Let us move out! The first target... ha ha! Metropolitan Police Department? I like this target!”

...

...

“Are you sure it is here?”

Their car had managed to shake off the pursuing police cars. It was likely that the firepower that Chen Xiaolian’s group was packing had shocked them, thus forcing them to retreat for the moment.

“I am sure,” Roddy immediately replied. “I have rechecked the map three times.”

“Son of a bitch!”

They halted the car at an intersection. At the corner, there was a very big, white wedge-shaped building.

“We need to be faster,” Chen Xiaolian turned to look upwards. Up in the skies, a police helicopter was hovering in the air, maintaining a sufficient level of altitude while following them. “Ordinary police may not be equipped with firearms, but I estimate that they would soon send a more

powerful team.”

“Let us go! We can only charge in,” Chen Xiaolian stopped the car and the three of them exited the car. The absurdly violent Bei Tai directed the M16 at the helicopter in the air, shooting a burst at it, causing the helicopter to dodge away.

“Go go go! Charge into the big building!” The three of them ran frantically and Chen Xiaolian zoomed in on the radar display within the system. The golden coloured blip was actually within the big building!

“Son of a bitch! It really is within the Metropolitan Police Department!”

When they entered, a police officer came over to stop them. Bei Tai struck him with the rifle’s butt and shot out a burst of bullets at the ceiling! Instantly, shrill cries erupted out from the lobby area and countless people ran in every direction. Some directly placed their heads down onto the ground.

“If you do not resist, you will not die!” Chen Xiaolian shouted several times using Japanese. The three of them rushed inside the big building, heading towards the displayed target area. They charged into the fire staircase.

“Son of a bitch! It is the 9th floor, can we not take the elevator?” Roddy let out a bitter smile.

“Idiot, if we take the elevator, we will be as good as dead once they stop it,” Chen Xiaolian kicked him. “You already have a strengthened body, what is there to fear from some stairs? Hurry up and move!”

The Metropolitan Police Department was in fact lacking in firearms and most of the people there were just office workers – at the very least, they were not assigned guns.

However, Chen Xiaolian did not make light of them. This was the police headquarters; they must have an armed security force. It was simply because they had charged in so suddenly that the armed security guard was likely still in the process of raising the alarm!

In one breath, they ran all the way up to the 9th floor and rushed out of

the fire escape path. They immediately caught sight of two robust looking police officers running towards them. One of them raised a revolver, its barrel aimed at Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian quickly retreated.

With a “bang”, a bullet struck the doorframe beside Chen Xiaolian, scaring him to the point of perspiring cold sweat!

His heart secretly felt fearful: That was too dangerous!

Bei Tai did not bother about anything else and simply unleashed a hail of bullets over, suppressing the two police officers, and leaving them crawling on the floor. Before they could raise their heads, Bei Tai had pulled out a grenade and sent it rolling towards them.

A loud “bang” reverberated from the corridor, followed by the cries of shock and misery.

“Charge! Remember, turn left in front and turn right after that. It is the second room!”

The three of them ran in frenzy through the corridor. No one in the building dared to step forward to stop them. The police officers within this big building have no firearms and the two back then were clearly part of the armed security that was just sent over. However, after Bei Tai suppressed them with a volley of bullets, a series of shouts came over from a walkie-talkie. Clearly, the other side was calling for reinforcements.

The three of them rushed towards the location indicated by the radar and saw a thick sturdy door. There were Japanese and English signs upon the door.

“Archives Division?”

Bei Tai smashed open the door and was about to rush in when a cold blade flashed out from the partly opened door!

Chen Xiaolian was ready for it. He held the Bone Crusher Axe in his hand and pulled Bei Tai back. The axe wielding hand moved to intercept the sword!

Dang!

Sparks flew about!

Chen Xiaolian could feel that the other party's strength was very strong. Wielding the axe with one hand, his body staggered and he took several steps back, falling onto the wall.

From behind the door, an Asian American man wearing a protective suit and wielding a katana charged out with a roar!

"Roddy, get back!"

Chen Xiaolian bellowed. He raised the Bone Crusher Axe and charged forward again!

Head Cleaver!

Impish Teeth Displacer!

Ear Gouger!

Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes were executed in succession. The other party was obviously disadvantaged in this exchange. The narrow katana was unsuited for hacking; additionally, the katana was less heavy compared to the axe. After receiving three successive strikes from Chen Xiaolian, the man was thrown backwards into the room. He fell onto a chair in the Archives Division, flattening it immediately!

"Do not enter first!" Chen Xiaolian suddenly grabbed a grenade from Bei Tai's hand and bit out the pin before throwing it into the room. Then, he closed the door!

Boom!

A huge explosion reverberated out from inside!

"Wicked!" Bei Tai gave him the thumbs up.

Chen Xiaolian pushed open the door to see the interior in ruins. The katana wielding Asian American was lying on the floor, groaning. Although he was wearing a protective suit, he did not have protective pants! His thighs and knees were bleeding profusely.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the corner of the room and found a glowing golden cube on the floor. That was the energy source!

Bei Tai pulled out a dagger and stepped forward with the intention of stabbing the katana wielding man's body. Chen Xiaolian though, stopped him. He walked forward and grabbed onto that man's neck. "Player? Awakened? Speak! Do you have any teammates?"

The man swore furiously. It turned out to be a standard Japanese word.

"If you speak, you live. If you don't you die!" Chen Xiaolian coldly raised the Bone Crusher Axe.

"I will speak!" The man cried out helplessly. "There is only me! I am an Awakened, do not kill me! Just take the energy source! I do not have teammates!"

"How did you end up hiding in the Metropolitan Police Department?" Chen Xiaolian quickly asked.

"Two days ago, I received the instance dungeon notification. Since the first phase of the quest is to protect the energy source, I searched for the safest and most suitable place for defence. Originally, I had wanted to sneak into prison. However, there was insufficient time. Thus, I could only forge some documents and sneak into this Metropolitan Police Department before the instance dungeon began."

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. "A very smart idea. Unfortunately for you, you bumped into us."

Chen Xiaolian quickly retrieved a pile of thin, white thread from the system – Black Widow's web!

Next, Chen Xiaolian tied one end of the thread around an archives cabinet. As for the other end, he handed it to the Japanese Awakened. "Hold it! I promised to let you live, I won't go back on my words."

"Eh?" The Japanese Awakened was stunned for a moment.

By then, Chen Xiaolian had already walked over and with one blow, smashed the window apart. The winds blew wildly inside and Chen

Xiaolian glanced out...

“Nine floors will certainly have a distance of more than 10 metres,” Chen Xiaolian spoke, carrying the Japanese Awakened towards the open window. “Hold the thread tightly. Whether you live or die will depend on yourself.” After saying that, Chen Xiaolian asked Bei Tai. “Do you have a handgun?”

“Yes!”

Bei Tai grinned and handed over a handgun. Chen Xiaolian shoved it into the Japanese Awakened’s chest.

The Japanese Awakened subconsciously wound the thread around his hand. Next, Chen Xiaolian tossed him out of the window!

The fellow screamed wretchedly as he fell down.

The spider web slid outside rapidly.

Finally, the spider web stopped sliding, leaving around 3 metres of distance between the man and the ground! Although the fellow was holding onto the thread, the momentum was too big and he was unable to endure it. His hand let go off the thread and he fell down!

However, he also has protection from his protective suit. After falling onto the ground, he struggled for a while before climbing back up.

Below the building, several police cars had pulled over and police officers holding onto firearms of varying length had surrounded the area. The Awakened fell from the skies while holding onto the spider web, transforming into their number one target.

The poor fellow was unwilling to be arrested without putting up a fight. He pulled out the handgun that Chen Xiaolian had given him in frustration, jumped behind a wall and started shooting at the police.

The warnings issued by the police had no effect and soon, both sides shot back and forth. In an instant, endless sounds of gunshots filled the outer area of the big building’s ground floor.

...

“All right, this fellow is taking the heat from the police. This should help buy us a few minutes.”

Chen Xiaolian picked up the katana and examined it. Observing that it was a [B] Class weapon, he tossed it to Roddy. “Take it. I will give it to you for now.”

Roddy was rather excited and he caught it with his hand and examined it, nearly cutting his own fingers in the process.

Chen Xiaolian walked over and picked up the energy source. This item appeared big, but was in fact very light. After picking it up from the floor, it shrank at a rapid pace! Finally, the item within Chen Xiaolian’s palm became the size of a cigarette box.

Chen Xiaolian tested and found that he could not place this item inside the system. He could only keep it in his pocket.

“We will leave this building through the other fire escape route! Bei Tai, you open the way. Roddy, you are in the middle. I will bring up the rear!” Chen Xiaolian’s face was one of determination. “Do not fall behind in the middle of the way! Do not stop no matter what happens!”

“Let us go!” Bei Tai raised the M16. “I have four more magazines. After that, I have no other methods. I did not expect this to happen here in Japan, so I did not make enough preparations.”

The three of them ran out of the room and found that there were almost no one left on the 9th floor. Most of them had fled. Chen Xiaolian and his team ran quickly towards the other side of the building and faced no resistance at all along the way. They charged into the other fire escape route and rushed downstairs.

After running down to the first floor, they opened the door of the fire escape route to find a team of heavily armed police officers rushing over!

These officers were not ordinary police officers. They wore tactical helmets, bulletproof vests and held onto automatic rifles...

1 Miranda Kerr, a lingerie model who was part of Victoria's Secret (American designer, manufacturer and marketer of premium lingerie for women and beauty products) brand.

2 I tried searching around but I can't find anything conclusive about this issue. One news site state that Japan police officers are assigned guns. However, they are not allowed to carry their gun when they are working unless they are on certain raids that require guns. So, most of the time, their gun would be kept in the station or equivalent.

Chapter 112: Rampage!

Right as Bei Tai's head stuck out, a hail of bullets flew out towards his head and he quickly backed up. He returned fire and shouted. "The corridor is blocked off! There are too many people! Should we use skills to kill our way out?"

"Don't! Heaven knows when we will encounter other Players. If possible, do not use your skill!" Chen Xiaolian was suddenly feeling regretful at his decision to not bring Qiao Qiao.

If Qiao Qiao was here, she could summon out the Black Widow. Those ordinary firearms would likely be unable to harm the Black Widow and it could open a path through this narrow place.

The quality of these armed men was clearly far superior when compared with the ordinary police officers.

They suppressed Chen Xiaolian and the other two into the corner of the corridor. Roddy shouted out. "Shouldn't Japanese police officers have no firearms?"

"Idiot, they will certainly have special forces," Chen Xiaolian scolded.

Back then, he caught sight of the mark on the tactical vest worn by the armed men. It was clearly written: Special Assault Team.

That was the Special Forces within the Japanese police force, similar to Armed Anti-Terror Police, codenamed: SAT (Special Assault Team).

Unfortunately for them, this place was the Metropolitan Police Department! After receiving an attack from thugs, the Metropolitan Police Department instantly transformed into a provoked hornet's nest!

"Retreat! We cannot charge out through the front!" Chen Xiaolian decided. They ran towards another end of the corridor. While doing so, Bei Tai did not forget to toss out a tactical grenade.

"There is no door!" Roddy who was at the front shouted out. Bei Tai caught up and hit him hard in the head. "Are you an idiot? Did you think you are an ordinary person? Let me have a go!"

This fellow produced out a piece of plastic explosive from the system!

Chen Xiaolian's eyes bulged out. "How do you have everything?"

"I usually like to mess around with these things. Last time when we were in the Qin Shi Huang instance dungeon, the usage of these things was restricted. Otherwise, I would have let those terracotta soldiers have a taste of my might!"

Bei Tai sneered as he finished setting up the explosive.

Chen Xiaolian kicked open a room door beside them and pulled Roddy inside...

The explosion erupted with a loud boom. Dense smoke billowed out as stones and gravel fell down!

Part of the room's ceiling collapsed from the shock and the fluorescent lights fell down.

Coughing a few times, Chen Xiaolian grabbed hold of Roddy and ran out from the dense smoke.

The explosion created a hole in the walls at the end of the corridor. The hole was big enough for an adult to slip through!

"Move! Move! Move! Hurry!"

Bei Tai took the vanguard position and charged forward, followed by Roddy and Chen Xiaolian.

Beyond the wall, there was actually a special passageway with metal piping lining the walls. Who knew what those pipes were for.

Clearly, they have entered an underground area.

The three of them were unable to get their bearings and they rushed forward. After making a few corners, they ended up running for roughly three minutes.

"Bloody Hell! They dug such a big hole beneath the Metropolitan Police Department?" Chen Xiaolian cursed.

With the Physique and Agility that the three of them possessed, three

minutes was enough to cover at least 2 kilometres.

“There is a door! Blow it up!”

Observing the thick metal doors before him, he struck it heavily with his fist. His face distorted. “Son of a bitch! Explosives will not be enough to open it! This door is too thick!”

Roddy sniggered and he walked forward, extending his hands to touch the door. Examining the electronic lock device on the metal door, he said. “Let me try.”

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Roddy.

Roddy wore a strange expression on his face. “The skill I selected is... Mechanical Heart.”

“Mechanical Heart? What is that thing?”

“Theoretically speaking, I can control all electronic machines of the technological type,” Roddy said proudly. “Naturally, a more complicated device would require a higher skill level. Even if you give me a Mech, the present me cannot control it. But, an electronic lock is no problem for me.”

Roddy placed both hands on the door and closed his eyes...

Pata!

Next, a series of “di di di di” alarm sounds rang out. The blast door opened!

“Move! Move! Move! Hurry!” Chen Xiaolian quickly pushed Roddy. The faint sounds of rapid footsteps could be heard closing in from the passageway behind them.

The three of them rushed through the blast door. Chen Xiaolian did not forget to turn around and push the door back into place. With a “pata” sound, the blast door was locked again.

...

“This, what is this place?”

The three of them stood before the door as they surveyed their surrounding environment. They were stunned.

...

The place was clearly an underground station. More accurately, it should be an underground warehouse! Furthermore, it was of the military type!

Clear warning signs were placed on the door and walls.

Amongst them was a sign that Chen Xiaolian was familiar with.

“Special Assault Team? Holy shit! We drilled our way into their lair?” Chen Xiaolian uttered a bitter laugh.

The warehouse was very big, as big as a football field.

In a spacious area beside them were several cars... unfortunately, that place seemed to be something akin to a machine repair station. The cars were missing either their engines or tires.

“Quick, look over there!”

Roddy pointed towards an area inside the warehouse.

The warehouse area had simple metal sliding doors enclosing it. The three of them walked over and Roddy immediately controlled the doors, causing it to slide open. Then... the three of them gasped!

A long, thick cannon barrel... steel plates exuding a cold aura... rough and sturdy treads...

After a full 10 seconds, Chen Xiaolian exhaled and said in a rather confused tone of voice. “Son of a bitch... since when did they assign the Japanese police team with a tank?”

Bei Tai and Roddy who were standing side by side, exclaimed in unison:

“TK-X, Type 10 tank!”

After they spoke out those words, they glanced at each other, their eyes conveying the words: You know about this?

“4-stroke water-cooled V8 diesel engine.”

“1200 hydraulic horsepower with mechanical type stepless transmission.”

The two of them uttered out those words and stared at each other again.

Roddy revealed an expression of embarrassment. “I am a bit of a military fanatic.”

“Haha! I thought you only like those sci-fi toys,” Bei Tai patted him on his shoulder. “In the future, we will be sharing a common interest.”

Chen Xiaolian stared at the tank and suddenly said. “This thing... can you start it up and drive it out?”

“... .. you want to drive this thing out?”

“What else? We have now charged into the lair of others. Are you planning on becoming Superman and kill your way out?” Chen Xiaolian then revealed a wicked smile. “Have you ever driven a tank through the streets of Tokyo? This opportunity comes once in a blue moon, you know?”

The eyes of both Bei Tai, the violent prone maniac and Roddy, the chuunibyou patient flashed out simultaneously!

...

...

“There is diesel in the gas tank!” Bei Tai had already climbed his way into the tank like a monkey. “Haha, the maintenance done on it is quite good.”

“The turret can be used... but there are no artillery shells. The standard equipped armament M2 machine gun has been taken off. Although the Type 74 machine gun armament is still here, there is no ammunition,” Roddy sighed as he sat on the turret.

Chen Xiaolian had already found a crucial spot beside the warehouse area. “This warehouse area can be raised! Look, just by pulling this lever on the wall, the ceiling of this warehouse should open up and this base will rise up, sending us to the surface.”

“Then what are you waiting for? Hurry up and get it up!”

Chen Xiaolian laughed out and pulled down the lever on the wall.

After a sharp alarm rang out, the ceiling of the warehouse area slowly split apart to the sides. The ground shook and the entire warehouse area slowly rose!

“Hurry up and enter the tank!”

...

Outside the Metropolitan Police Department, over ten police cars have surrounded the exterior of the building. Additionally, there were also several armoured vehicles stationed outside. Fully armed Japanese Special Assault Team members had already charged into the big building, leaving a few officers to block off the street.

It was at that moment...

On the left side of the building, a spacious open hatch slowly separated by itself...

One minute later, a tank was revealed before the light of day!

The police officers in the vicinity broke into a commotion!

“What the Hell! Who opened this place up?”

A high-ranking Japanese police officer stood behind a police car, gaping at the tank that had appeared from beneath the big building!

Beside him, a member of the Special Assault Team who wore combat uniform broke out in cold sweat. He replied. “We... we had originally scheduled a joint exercise with the Self Defence Force (SDF) three days from now... this... this tank was temporarily loaned over for drilling purposes. It has since been placed in the maintenance warehouse for maintenance... What the Hell! How did they enter the maintenance warehouse? That place is fully sealed off!”

...

“Roddy, do you know how to start this thing?” Inside the tank, Bei Tai

was seated in the gunner position, allowing Roddy to sit in the driver's spot.

Roddy spit on both his palms and rubbed them. "Son of a bitch! Let us give it a go! If it does not work, then I will use my Mechanical Heart skill!"

"Follow my instructions! Open the diesel switch, switch on the master circuit... right, that is the place! Next is the motor pump switch! Good, step on the clutch! Hahaha, that is right! Then, press start! Pull the pole to the lowest speed... that is it! That is correct! Hahahaha! Let us go all out! Let us move out!"

A loud sound burst out, it was the roaring sound of the Type 10 tank's V8 engine!

Next, before the eyes of the panicking police officers, the tank treads slowly rotated...

The tank's magnificent body charged directly through the outer fence of the big building, easily tearing apart a segment of the metal fence. After that, it bulldozed its way into the streets!

"Quick, stop them!"

Tat tat tat tat tat. Chug chug chug chug chug...

The countless number of police officers fired with their various types of firearms! However, their bullets struck the surface of the tank in vain; the only result was the sounds of "ding ding dang dang".

"Let's go!" Roddy screamed, shifting the tank into high gear, charging forward!

Two police cars were positioned on the intersection to form a blockade. But the tank simply charged forward! The police officers there fired frantically. Seeing the tank barrelling towards them however, they could only scatter away...

Crunch crunch... the tank tread rolled across the surface of the cars. The tank shook slightly before moving through with wanton abandon! As for the two police cars behind, only flattened scrap metal were left of

them.

Next, the tank tread casually rolled past the roadblock's iron spikes placed on the intersection area.

Chapter 113: Mantis Stalks the Cicada

“Too cool!” Roddy cheered loudly as Bei Tai who was beside him laughed. “Two blocks, after that it is my turn to have fun.”

“Don’t be too happy first! There is an obstruction in front!”

Two armoured explosion-proof vehicles drove towards them at a rapid pace!

“Ram past them?”

“Don’t! Those explosion-proof vehicles are armoured. If our tank treads get damaged, we will be stranded on the road! When that happens, we will be finished,” Bei Tai sniggered. “You continue driving; I will deliver some presents for them.”

He abruptly began controlling the gunner position!

“I thought there aren’t any artillery shells?” Chen Xiaolian stared.

“There are none in the tank, but my system might have some. Let me check,” Bei Tai narrowed his eyes. “120-mm artillery shells... aha! I have it, only two though! Haha!”

...

On the road, the two armoured explosion-proof vehicles have stopped and two team of soldiers leapt out from the vehicles! One could easily tell that these men were from the Special Assault Team. Through the periscope, Chen Xiaolian noticed that these soldiers were equipped with anti-materiel rifles [1]!

The soldiers shouted out something in Japanese and they quickly assumed tactical formation. A hail of bullets rained on the tank as it moved forward...

At that moment, something occurred, causing the soldiers from the Special Assault Team to suffer from an expulsion of their souls!

The tank’s turret suddenly moved and the muzzle of the turret slowly turned...

“What is going on? Is it aiming at us?”

“Isn’t it not supposed to have any shells?”

“Bloody Hell!”

“Hurry up and disperse! Get away from the artillery fire!”

Boom!!!

A loud sound erupted and orange flame sprayed out from the muzzle of the turret!

A 120-mm artillery shell flew out and the armoured explosion-proof vehicle on the left was blasted into the air! The body of the vehicle exploded into pieces while the orange flames enveloped half the road in an instant. The shockwave from the explosion also knocked the other explosion-proof vehicle to the side.

The tank then drove triumphantly through the orange flames and black billowing smoke!

...

Inside the tank, the three young men exclaimed! Even Chen Xiaolian was feeling the kick from the flowing adrenaline.

This feeling of starting up a tank to flatten other cars, drive with wanton abandon through the streets and blasting the target with artillery to suppress them...

Too bloody enjoyable!

...

The Type 10 tank sped through the streets of Tokyo. Although they could only reach a maximum speed of 70 mph, this feeling was enough to make them excited!

Behind them, several armoured explosion-proof vehicles of the Japanese Special Assault Team were in pursuit. However, they dared not get too close. As for the ordinary police cars... they could only follow at the very rear of the pursuing team. All they could do was release the siren’s

warning sound. Were they trying to intimidate their opponents or were they trying to drum up courage for themselves, no one knew.

“Think of something to shake these guys off! We cannot let these guys follow us all the time.”

Roddy frowned. “Hurry up and check the map.”

“Check what map?” Bei Tai produced a cigarette and took a drag before uttering. “Do not forget, we are now driving a tank!”

“You mean...”

“Mr Lu Xun [2] had once said... there was originally no road...”

...

Boom!

The tank smashed its way into a large shopping mall from an intersection!

The tank treads rolled through the expensive marble floors and crashed through the luxurious crystal lamps, rampaging through the interior of the shopping mall as it moved further inside!

The huge crystal lamp fell down and sharp screams resounded through the shopping mall.

Roddy focused on controlling the tank, leading it as it swaggered through the central area of the shopping mall. Next, he went berserk, made a 90-degree turn, and smashed out into the other side of the street, breaking through an LV shop while doing so!

Following the sounds of crashing, the glass was shattered to pieces!

The tank moved out from the side into the streets. Atop the turret muzzle, there was an LV branded bag of the latest edition.

“Cool!”

Bei Tai screamed out. “Guild Leader! Why don’t we just head into the National Diet (House of Representatives)? Or maybe the Prime Minister’s residence?”

“Enough messing around! Just shake off those fellows! We need to find a place to get off,” Chen Xiaolian said in a serious tone. “There is only 24 hours. So far, we have only acquired one energy source.”

He quickly pulled out the system quest interface.

Upon the radar, another golden blip has appeared.

“The second energy source has appeared! The distance between us is... eh? It’s very close!” Chen Xiaolian rechecked it carefully and his face changed. “That is not right! It is moving! It is coming at us!”

Roddy knitted his eyebrows. “How could the energy source be moving?”

“It seems the system has randomly assigned us with an energy source that has already been snatched away!” Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth. “Son of a bitch! Why is our luck so bad? To be able to snatch the energy source from others, these people are definitely not good people! Bloody Hell! They are moving very fast on the radar! They must have a car. They are coming in closer! They are just beyond the right corner before us!”

At that moment... at the intersection before them, something sent a commercial car flying through the air! As it landed, it rolled across the ground several times.

Next, a metal monstrosity with an overbearing appearance and highly technological atmosphere roared out into existence!

It turned around at the intersection and headed straight for the Type 10 tank that Chen Xiaolian and the others were in!

“That... what the Hell is that thing?”

Both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy shouted out at the same time.

With just one glance, Bei Tai’s face instantly changed! He hastily tossed away the cigarette butt and shouted. “Thunderstorm Tank! Bloody Hell! We have encountered a high-level team!”

Thunderstorm Tank?

Hearing this name, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy’s eyes revealed disbelief!

The immense object before them was twice as big as this 40-tonned Type 10 tank!

Comparing them was equivalent to comparing an ordinary car with a dump truck!

The stout turret muzzle was actually square shaped! The sci-fi feeling exuding from it was overwhelming!

Bei Tai was hastily controlling the gunner position, loading up the last 120-mm artillery shell. After aiming the turret...

Boom!

The tank shook!

Orange flames sprayed out from the muzzle of the turret and the shell whistled forward!

Next, something jaw dropping occurred before them.

The 120-mm artillery shell slammed into the front surface area of the metal tank opposite them, and...

Bounced off!

Not a single trace was left on the surface of the tank!

“Damn it! Electromagnetic Shielding Device!”

Bei Tai roared out in despair. “Quick! Get out! Their turret is moving! Hurry up and run!”

...

The three of them jumped out of the tank. Chen Xiaolian grabbed Roddy who was climbing down the turret and pulled him straight down. Then, they quickly ran to the side of the street...

Their strengthened [B] Class attributes saved them! They forced out their strength and speed and reached the side of the street in merely 2 seconds. Turning around, they saw a lightning bolt flash out from the Thunderstorm Tank’s square shaped turret!

The electrical bolt immediately cut through the Type 10 tank left in the

middle of the road! The only things left of the tank were two piles of scrap metal.

The metals within the pierced through area of the tank could be seen melting!

A 50-metre deep pit was left upon the wide street area!

“Damn! So brutal?” Roddy stared with wide-open eyes.

At that moment, the sound of sirens came and two armoured explosion-proof vehicles caught up.

“Hurry up and run! This target is beyond our ability to deal with!” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth.

“Let’s go! We cannot provoke a team that can afford a Thunderstorm Tank!” Bei Tai let out a bitter smile. “Take advantage of this time when the police are keeping them occupied and run!”

The two armoured explosion-proof vehicles halted in the middle of the road. Clearly, the colossal object in front had left the soldiers from the Special Assault Team stunned!

“Who can tell me what that thing is? Is it our Self Defence Force?”

“Oh, Hell! They are turning the turret muzzle! It is pointing at us!”

“Get out now!”

Boom!

A bolt of lightning seared forward, blasting the armoured explosion-proof vehicle up into the skies. It then fell onto the ground, nothing more than a piece of molten scrap. None of the armed soldiers within the vehicle managed to run out...

The soldiers in the other vehicle were shocked and they quickly retreated. One of the soldiers climbed up to the roof of the vehicle to commandeer the installed machine gun to unleash a wild barrage of bullets at the other party. Unfortunately, the bullets fell onto the surface of the Thunderstorm Tank harmlessly, not even capable of annoying it.

“Hurry!” Chen Xiaolian quickly shouted and the three of them ran into a narrow street.

Three figures jumped down from the Thunderstorm Tank and they quickly ran to the roadside. Clearly, they were chasing after Chen Xiaolian and his team...

...

“Why is it so noisy outside?”

Qiao Qiao stood by the window, watching the street below.

There were almost no pedestrians left on the street. Apparently, this disaster stricken country of Japan has a very effective set of emergency measures.

There were only police cars and fire engines roaring through from the main street.

There were also police cars moving slowly, using loudspeakers to make certain announcements. The announcement was for the civilians to leave the public areas and stay at home or move to the nearest shelter.

“It has been over an hour.”

Qiao Qiao sighed, looking very anxious.

“Do not be nervous. Being nervous at this time is useless.”

Lun Tai held onto a sword, lightly wiping it.

Suddenly, his face changed. He stood up and turned to face the door before hiding himself in a corner. At the same time, he waved to Qiao Qiao. The others within the room quickly hid themselves. Qiao Qiao held onto Soo Soo and hid behind the sofa.

“It’s us!”

Bei Tai’s voice came from beyond the door. Lun Tai then went over and carefully removed a grenade set onto the door handle.

Chen Xiaolian and the other two entered.

“See? I told you not to carelessly open the door,” Bei Tai pointed to the

grenade on the door handle. If I had not pulled you earlier, you would currently be lying on the floor. My big bro is very vigilant.”

“How did it go?” Qiao Qiao walked over.

Chen Xiaolian pulled out a cigarette box sized energy source from his pocket. “We were lucky. It was a lone Awakened and we got one. However, on our way back, we encountered a group of experts and were nearly killed off.”

“You managed to shake them off? Did they tail you?” Lun Tai frowned.

“No, we were very careful. We deliberately went around in a circle and observed a few times. No one was tailing us,” Bei Tai immediately replied. “Big bro, you all here...”

“Nothing happened,” Lun Tai shook his head. “No one came to snatch.”

Chen Xiaolian went over to pick up a bottle of mineral water. Drinking a few mouthfuls of water, he gasped for breath. “We may be in trouble! After we snatched an energy source, the system randomly assigned us a new target. However... the opponent is a very strong team.”

“Strong? How strong?” Lun Tai raised his eyebrows.

“They have a Thunderstorm Tank,” Bei Tai replied.

Lun Tai’s face instantly distorted and turned dark.

...

In the back corner of a street opposite of the hotel...

Three people wearing highly sci-fi combat suits stood quietly. A beefy man took off his helmet and sneered as he turned to look at the tall hotel building.

Surprisingly, this man was the Team Leader of the Thorned Flower Guild’s team!

“Falcon, calling Falcon,” He pressed his headset.

“I discovered a team. They should have just returned from a hunt. I purposely chose not to attack them and tailed them to locate their base. I

surmise that their side may have another snatched energy source besides their own.”

“You are still as crafty as ever, Team Leader,” Falcon answered.

“Well then, what is the situation?”

“Wait... eh? Team Leader! Hide fast! An aircraft is quickly approaching your coordinates!”

“Aircraft?”

The beefy man raised his head to look at the skies...

Above the blue skies, a faint trail of flames suddenly streaked through the expanse. Something resembling a flying bird pierced through the skies, heading in their direction! As it flew, an umbrella shaped sound barrier was created!

The object flew speedily before stopping above the big building, hovering in mid-air.

...

“En, the location of the displayed energy source should be here...”

The aircraft was in fact, a person! Only that this person was wearing a human shaped flight gear! At the backside of the gear were orange coloured turbines discharging flames out of it.

Under the helmet visor was a beautifully curved face. The mouth on the face pursed up and this person let out a scoff.

Beneath the visor, several strands of purple hair were visible!

This person wearing flight gear was...

The pilot from Zero City – Nicole!

...

“Damn it! That... is someone from Zero City!”

The beefy man’s face changed and he took several steps back. The three of them hid behind a signboard. “A big fish has arrived...”

He whispered into the headset.

“Falcon, Falcon! I am the Team Leader, my coordinates is... there is a big fish here! I command for all team members to approach my current coordinates! Bring over every Thunderstorm Tank! I repeat, bring over every Thunderstorm Tank!”

—

1 Anti-materiel rifle is designed against military equipment. Not enough to go against armoured vehicles like tanks, but effective against lightly armoured vehicles. I mean... who expects a TANK?

2 Lu Xun, raw: ‘鲁迅’. (1881 – 1936) He was a leading figure of modern Chinese literature. [Source: Wiki].

Chapter 114: Nicole Appears

“Holy shit! You guys really charged into the Metropolitan Police Department? Then... you started up a tank and drove it through the street of Tokyo?”

Qiao Qiao stared at Roddy.

Roddy was showing a delighted expression. “Wahaha! I will never, ever forget that feeling! Do you know how it feels to use a tank to flatten a police car? Hahahaha! There is also Bei Tai, he used an artillery to blast an armoured explosion-proof vehicle off its wheels!

“We drove the tank into a shopping mall, cutting a way through without opposition! Whenever we saw a luxury boutique, we’ll smash through them! There’s Chanel, Gucci, Hermes... in the end, we broke our way out through an LV store!”

Hearing about their adventures, Qiao Qiao’s eyes glittered – this Big Miss has quite a violent side to her character.

“If I had known, I would have gone with you!” Qiao Qiao sighed. “I was unable to participate in such an enjoyable matter.”

“That is enough, stop talking about that,” Chen Xiaolian wore a grim expression. “Everyone, come over. We need to discuss our next step.”

After everyone sat down, Chen Xiaolian produced the miniaturized energy source and placed it on the table. He slowly said. “We have encountered a problem. The target energy source displayed by the system belongs to a very powerful team. We cannot afford to challenge that team.

“Here is the problem... we need to collect five of these energy sources before the countdown ends. That is why... I want to hear your opinions. Do you all have any good opinions?”

“It is as you said, the enemy possess a Thunderstorm Tank. That means we simply do not have the means of opposing them. Against such a powerful opponent, retreating is the better option,” Lun Tai was the first

to speak out. Frowning, he continued. “No need to smash eggs against a rock.

“As for the quest, perhaps we could go about it using another method.”

“What method?” Bei Tai asked.

“The most basic way,” Lun Tai replied. “Search using manpower.”

“Search using manpower?” Several of them were surprised.

The only one who was able to maintain his calm was Chen Xiaolian. He sighed. “I was thinking about that as well. Before we can come up with a better method, using manpower to search is the best option. There should be a high number of Players and Awakened ones within Tokyo City. We can only move out to search and test our luck. If we can find a weaker target to fight, this method may become our chance to ride through this difficult time.”

In truth, Chen Xiaolian did not completely agree with Lun Tai’s opinion of ‘smashing eggs against a rock’.

Although the might displayed by the Thunderstorm Tank was astonishing, Chen Xiaolian did not feel that they were powerless to fight back! At the very least... Bai Qi that he acquired from the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang gave him a great deal of confidence!

Only... in order to snatch just one energy source, there was no need to take such a big risk. The cost performance would be too low – if they were able to snatch five energy sources in that one fight, then Chen Xiaolian might actually go for it!

...

“We will have to depend purely on luck,” Roddy smiled bitterly.

“We do not have a better way,” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt someone tugging his hand. He turned around to see Soo Soo looking at him with widened eyes.

“Oppa.”

“Hmm?”

“Outside... someone seems to be watching us,” Soo Soo’s eyes were wide open as she pointed at the window.

“... what?”

Chen Xiaolian quickly turned his head. His face changed! The same was true for the rest of the people within the room!

A figure was quietly suspended in the middle of the air outside the glass wall windows!

That was clearly a human-shaped Mech armour, a smaller version to fit a human soldier. Behind the figure, there were turbines emitting faint orange flames.

Most importantly, using some kind of secret technology, this figure managed to approach the window without making any noise! The turbines spouting off orange flames were not making any noise at all!

The figure outside was wearing a helmet with a visor below, masking the figure’s face completely. Only the figure’s pair of eyes was visible as they coldly observed everything within the room.

Chen Xiaolian noticed that the figure was staring at the huge energy source located on the floor!

Time seemed to have frozen for one whole second before Chen Xiaolian made his reaction. He shouted loudly. “Enemy attack!”

After shouting, he grabbed onto Soo Soo and Qiao Qiao, falling forward onto the floor!

At the same time, the figure outside the window raised a hand, placing a palm onto the surface of the window...

Boom!

A powerful shockwave suddenly rippled outwards! The huge glass wall window imploded!

The powerful shockwave turned the entire room upside down! The one

closest to the window was Lun Tai. The shockwave threw him backwards until he smashed onto the wall! Bei Tai roared, instantly summoning out an M16 in his hands and he fired it at the figure hovering outside.

A concentrated hail of bullets flew forward, but white dots suddenly appeared before the figure. All the bullets that came in contact with her body were repelled!

Next, the figure raised a hand to point at Bei Tai, sending out a shockwave beam that sent him crashing through the living room and into another room!

...

Nicole flew into the room at incredible speed. After charging into the room, she did not move towards the energy source on the floor. Instead, she quickly shot towards the table.

The miniaturized energy source that Chen Xiaolian managed to snatch was there!

Suddenly, a black shadow slammed into her head-on!

Bang!

Nicole flew out, smashing through the walls into a suite and into the bedroom!

Chen Xiaolian stood by the windows, the Bone Crusher Axe in hand, gasping heavily.

Before Chen Xiaolian could do anything, Nicole had already shot out! All Chen Xiaolian could see was a blur as Nicole grabbed onto Chen Xiaolian's axe. The two of them wrestled and Chen Xiaolian bellowed out... however, the flames emitted by the turbines behind Nicole had turned red in colour!

With a "bang", Nicole pushed Chen Xiaolian back by about 3 or 4 metres, smashing him onto the walls and breaking right through it!

"Bastard!"

Qiao Qiao had already climbed up. Watching what was happening, her

eyes turned red and she moved to grab the room's coffee table.

Big Miss Qiao raised the 2-metre long coffee table with just one hand and she brandished it against Nicole!

The table slammed onto Nicole's back, breaking into pieces and causing Nicole's body to stagger. Nicole let go off Chen Xiaolian and turned around, staring coldly at Qiao Qiao. By then, Qiao Qiao was already moving to grab a stand lamp beside her. The opponent charged at her!

Nicole intercepted the stand lamp and the turbines changed colour again, increasing the power output. Qiao Qiao was lifted off her feet and was thrown into the washroom!

Nicole twisted the metal stand lamp and tossed it onto the floor.

By then, Chen Xiaolian had already climbed out of the rubble. Wielding the Bone Crusher Axe, he pounced forward.

Nicole turned around and raised a hand against Chen Xiaolian. A red beam of light shot out from her palm!

The light fell upon the Bone Crusher Axe and the metal handle abruptly heated up, turning red in colour!

Chen Xiaolian's palm felt pain and he cried out. He was unable to hold on to the axe and it fell onto the floor. At that moment, Nicole picked someone up from the floor and quickly retreated through the broken glass wall windows. She then hovered outside the building.

She held onto the person's ankle, carrying this person upside down with her hand. The person struggled while screaming wretchedly. It was none other than Roddy!

Chen Xiaolian saw that the other party has caught onto Roddy and was hovering in the air. If that person lets go, then Roddy would fall down from up high. Chen Xiaolian became frantic and was about to summon out Bai Qi.

It was then...

"Please stop!"

An electronically synthesized voice came out.

Next, Nicole's helmet opened up and her visor slipped back, revealing her face.

When that happened, Chen Xiaolian became stunned. "... It's you?"

It was only then that Chen Xiaolian's guild members were able to get up, albeit barely.

What happened earlier happened too fast! From the moment Nicole charged into the room, the time it took for her to repulse the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai, fought back against Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao, grab hold of Roddy and fly out was less than 10 seconds!

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai had already got up. It was apparent that Lun Tai had suffered from considerable damage. Back then, he was the closest to the glass wall window. When the window was broken, he received the most damage from the shockwave.

As for Xia Xiaolei, he was knocked unconscious. Even though he had woken up, he was still feeling muddled.

"It was actually... this little girl?" Lun Tai jerked his head.

"Stop it. You are not my match and I too, do not wish to kill."

Nicole held onto Roddy's ankle in the middle of the air. She purposely left a space of several metres between herself and the building. Coldly, she said. "You should know who I am."

Hearing Nicole's voice, Roddy who was being held by her, stopped struggling.

"You... what do you want to do?" Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth.

"I don't plan on doing anything," Nicole replied coldly. "I have no grudge against you all. However, I have been forced into this instance dungeon. Additionally... the target energy source that the system displayed for me just happens to belong to you."

Chen Xiaolian was left speechless.

“There is no need for me to go into the details,” Nicole continued indifferently. “I have no grudge against you all. However, the system’s assignment just happened to be you. In order to complete the quest and perhaps protect my own life, I need to collect five energy sources. Thus, I need to take yours. This is not a personal grudge. If you want to blame someone, blame the system.”

Chen Xiaolian had nothing to say.

Indeed, Nicole was not wrong.

They were neither related nor intimate. She too, due to being within the instance dungeon, has to snatch the energy source of others – it just so happened that the target assigned by the system happened to be Chen Xiaolian’s.

Would you not go snatch?

Why choose to not snatch? Just because they met once within Zero City and exchanged a few words?

Not completing the quest would result in receiving punishment from the system!

“I do not want to kill,” Nicole shook her head. “Otherwise, I would not have stayed my hand up until now. If so, many of you would not be alive right now.”

“... first, let go of Roddy,” Chen Xiaolian sullenly replied.

“Let’s discuss it through,” Nicole said coldly. “I am still in need of 2 energy sources. I do not wish to kill. So, as long as you hand over the 2 energy sources that you have, I will leave. Even though you will fail and receive the system’s punishment, you won’t necessarily die. But if you refuse, then right here and now...”

After saying that, Nicole slightly loosened her grip on Roddy, causing him to fall down a bit!

“It won’t be too hard for me to kill all of you.”

Chapter 115: Struck Down

“Stop!” Chen Xiaolian clenched his fist and took a deep breath. Without hesitating, he said. “All right!”

He bent down and picked up the cigarette box-shaped energy source that dropped down the floor in the chaos earlier.

“You can take it! Put Roddy down!”

“First, move away from this room. Move to a sufficient enough distance.”

“... very well!” Chen Xiaolian could only helplessly turn to look at the others. Next, they all retreated, moving out from the door and into the hotel corridor.

Nicole smirked. Her body hovered and approached the building. After that, she used one hand to hold onto Roddy’s throat, carrying him into the room as she followed everyone into the corridor.

Her hands never left Roddy’s throat! Considering her ability to twist metal earlier, twisting Roddy’s neck was a simple matter.

“Enough! There are more than 30 metres of distance between here and the room!” Chen Xiaolian said coldly.

“All right, that is enough. Now, let us trade.”

Chen Xiaolian understood what she meant and sighed. Then, he tossed over the energy source.

Nicole caught it with one hand. Next, a slot opened up on the left thigh of her Mech armour and she placed it inside.

“Although this action of mine is very cruel, but... this is an unjust and immoral world we live in. As such, I am sorry. I can only wish you good luck.”

Nicole coldly declared as she put Roddy on the ground and shot backwards with the speed of lightning!

With the powerful turbine by her side, Nicole who wore the Mech

armour obtained an absolute advantage in speed! She shot back into the room with lightning like speed!

Chen Xiaolian and the others quickly rushed forward. However, by the time they charged into the room, Nicole had already gotten her hands on the energy source within the room. She flew out of the hotel building and hovered at a distance of over 10 metres from the building.

The energy source within her hand shrunk rapidly and finally turned into the size of a small box, which she then kept.

Nicole looked at Chen Xiaolian and the others who were standing on the ledge and said softly. "I wish you all good luck."

After saying that, she pulled her helmet and visor back into place and turned around. The turbines released orange flames, bringing Nicole far away...

Chen Xiaolian wore a livid expression. Roddy who stood beside gritted his teeth heavily. Before they could say anything, a loud explosion reverberated from the outside!

...

On the street, a colossal Thunderstorm Tank was positioned in the middle of the street like a monster.

With an overbearing appearance, it shifted its square shaped artillery muzzle, pointing it up into the sky.

Then... BANG!

A blue coloured bolt of lightning roared through the skies!

Up in the skies, Nicole was flying through two big buildings when the bolt of lightning struck her! The ambushers were very crafty; they hid the trajectory for the bolt of lightning behind a big building. As it so happened, that was Nicole's blindspot!

Struck by the lightning bolt, Nicole's body slammed into the adjacent big building!

A loud crashing sound resonated and the glass walls of the building

were thoroughly broken! They were instantly shattered by Nicole!

A series of steel fracturing sounds were emitted.

Next, Nicole flew out from the other side of the building!

She was blasted through the building!

In the skies, Nicole's body resembled a shot bird as she fell down!

Just as she was about to slam onto the ground, Nicole's Mech armour suddenly ejected a parachute out, reducing the speed of her fall. After that... she landed on a street area far away.

The scene dumbfounded Chen Xiaolian and Roddy.

Rather, the scene dumbfounded everyone within the room!

Lun Tai coughed out blood and suddenly shouted. "She has energy sources on her! Five energy sources!"

Those words brought everyone back! That was especially true for Chen Xiaolian. His face changed and his eyes flashed brilliantly.

Five energy sources!

Now that was worth fighting for!

Besides, they needed to win back their own energy source. Otherwise, they would lose!

"Qiao Qiao!" Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. "Black Widow!"

Qiao Qiao was startled and she summoned out the Black Widow without considering anything else. After the massive Black Widow appeared within the room, Chen Xiaolian quickly jumped atop the Black Widow and used both hands to grip tightly onto it. He shouted. "Get the spider to crawl down from the outside! Hurry! The time to snatch has come!"

Qiao Qiao and the others immediately understood Chen Xiaolian's intentions!

Time to snatch!

Hurry towards Nicole's crash site!

When you are strong, you can snatch from us and we could harbour no hard feelings.

But when you are weak and we do the same to you, you can blame no one as well!

Just snatch!

The Thunderstorm Tanks resting on the street have already begun moving towards the distant street area. Considering their size, they were unable to move at a very fast pace and were slower than an ordinary car. Additionally, there were many abandoned cars on the street. They needed to break through those obstacles and were unable to speed up.

Both Qiao Qiao and Roddy jumped onto the Black Widow.

Next, the Black Widow crawled out of the hotel building and onto the walls. Chen Xiaolian shouted out. "The rest of you find a place to hide!"

Lun Tai had already suffered from serious injuries and was vomiting blood. Even after taking medicinal substances, he will still need some time to recover.

...

The Black Widow carried the three of them upon its back, but was still able to crawl at incredible speed through the outer walls of the big building. With the high altitude winds blowing at them, Chen Xiaolian, Roddy and Qiao Qiao had to grit their teeth and hold on tightly. This was especially true for Roddy, he didn't even dare to open his eyes – the wall was built at a 90-degree angle from the ground after all!

The spider crawled rapidly and was able to reach the ground quickly. Under Qiao Qiao's command, it circled around to the back of the building.

In less than one minute, the spider landed on the ground. It was much faster than even the elevator! The three of them did not jump down. Qiao Qiao continued controlling the Black Widow, and after having identified

their bearings, they rushed promptly towards Nicole's crash site!

The Black Widow moved through the streets at a much faster speed compared to ordinary cars! Especially when considering the Black Widow's natural gifts. Manoeuvring up and down, left and right regardless of how messy the road had become. Even when faced with those abandoned cars, its eight legs allowed it to crawl right through them!

There were people within the stores and houses beside the road. These people gaped as they observed a huge spider crawl through the road with three people on its back. Some cried out, others were terrified while some others produced their mobile phones to take pictures. Some even called up the cops...

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian simply could not be bothered with those!

Turning past a corner, they approached Nicole's crash site. Observing far into the distance... in an intersection about a hundred metres away, the rumbling engine sounds of the Thunderstorm Tanks' roared out towards them.

...

Upon a small crossroad, Nicole was lying on the ground at the centre position. Most of the Mech armour that she was wearing was broken. Upon the surface of her armour, there were cracks and severe scorch marks. Some critical parts were also emitting sounds of sparks.

Most shockingly was the lower left abdomen area. There was a huge gap there as the Mech armour was directly pierced through and blood was flowing out.

Nicole forced herself up. Her left index finger released a thin laser blade, which she used to cut off the parachute straps. She attempted to move to the side of the street. However, that small amount of movement caused her vision to blacken from pain.

She had already produced a High Class Healing Beast Blood and

swallowed it. However, the system within the visor kept issuing out sharp warning sounds.

Each of the body vitals index on the monitor were rapidly decreasing. Nicole judged that she would not be able to restore normal movement capacity within half an hour.

Raising her head, she saw the Black Widow rushing over. Her face changed!

She quickly raised her right arm and the outer layer of the Mech armour suddenly turned around. It rapidly transformed into a thin flat barrel.

Upon her monitor's interface, Nicole had locked onto them. However, she could only grit her teeth. She did not shoot because she had noticed the rumbling sounds of the Thunderstorm Tanks charging over from the other intersection!

Turning around, she observed as the metal monstrosities trampled their way through the cars parked beside the street. Their huge bodies moved up and down as they continued advancing towards her!

The distance between the Black Widow and herself was now less than 10 metres!

Nicole abruptly turned around, pointing the barrel of her gun at the Black Widow.

However, Chen Xiaolian used one sentence to make her lower her gun.

"Take your pick! We just want the energy sources and not your life! But those fellows would probably want both! Do you want to fight us or are you willing to let us save you away from here?"

Nicole did not hesitate to lower the gun barrel on her hand. She then extended another hand towards Chen Xiaolian. "Pull me up! I will give you the energy sources!"

Chen Xiaolian pulled Nicole up onto the Black Widow's back. The Black Widow quickly turned around, rushing madly towards another road! The

Thunderstorm Tanks behind increased their speed and gave chase.

As the Black Widow rushed through a corner, a hair-raising scenario occurred!

The road before them forked into two roads, one left and one right. A Thunderstorm Tank rolled out from them both! One of them had directly smashed its way out from a building!

Attack from both sides!

Chen Xiaolian swore. Nicole said coldly. "Move aside!"

"En?"

Chen Xiaolian turned around and his body tilted to see Nicole raising her right arm. She pointed the flat-barrelled rifle gun at the Thunderstorm Tank before them...

Xiu!

Everyone's ears instantly felt a sharp, tearing pain! A thin blue light shot out, creating an air-piercing sound!

After the blue light struck the Thunderstorm Tank, the tank continued moving for about 10 metres. Then, it stopped...

A loud explosion erupted! The turret flew up and orange flames burst out from the inside!

The Thunderstorm Tank with a defence that was impervious to even artillery shells was destroyed on the spot!

"Damn! What kind of weapon is that? Shoot the one at the back as well!"

Roddy went wild.

"War armour has sustained severe damage, there is not enough energy!" Nicole's body swayed and blood trickled down her mouth. She pointed to the destroyed Thunderstorm Tank before them. "Hurry up and rush through!"

Chen Xiaolian observed the scene before him and hastily pointed at one

of the big buildings to the left. “Qiao Qiao! Tell the Black Widow to move up! We will never shake them off on flat ground!”

...

Chapter 116: Mech Angel

“Hold on tight!”

Seeing the Black Widow rush through the street and jumping onto the walls of the big building to their left, Qiao Qiao shouted out.

The youngsters riding on the back of the spider quickly laid their bodies down. Chen Xiaolian tightly held onto the thorn protruding out from the top part of the Black Widow’s limbs.

The injured Nicole suddenly let out a cry as her left hand loosened, causing half her body to hang down and sway. At that moment, Roddy immediately extended his hand to embrace Nicole’s waist. He howled and pushed her up. Next, he threw himself onto Nicole, using his body to keep Nicole in place.

Nicole turned around and looked at Roddy’s face that was very close to her. A complicated emotion flashed through her eyes.

The Black Widow was a spider after all. It moved quickly through the vertical walls of the building as though it was on level surface. Soon, it had circled around the building.

At that moment, they thought they have temporarily staved off danger...

Suddenly a loud noise rang out!

The Thunderstorm Tank behind the building opened fire!

The turret launched out a radiant blue coloured bolt at the big building, piercing right through the walls! The area pierced through by the blue coloured ray was just several metres before the Black Widow!

The walls collapsed and the Black Widow staggered. At the same time, the few youngsters riding on it exclaimed in shock!

...

“Full power! Blast down that big building!”

The beefy Team Leader was shouting.

The drivers within one of the Thunderstorm Tank quickly set the power to maximum!

Instantly, the turret muzzle emitted blue coloured arcs of electrical current...

Boom!

This time's blue coloured electrical bolt was far thicker than the ones released earlier!

Under the power of the blast, the big building on the left was punctured through again!

The electrical arcs instantly melted down the walls and the exposed reinforcing steels!

The corner area of the building appeared as though it had been hacked by a knife, directly cutting off one third of its structure!

The broken walls of the collapsing building fell down along with its fragmented walls, stones and other exposed reinforcing steels like rain.

Almost one third of the walls were collapsing down and the Black Widow was unable to run. In the end, it too slid down from the walls of the building.

Its sickle-like claws struggled as it waved about, trying its best to find a leveraging point on one of the falling wall fragments...

Finally, the collapsed fragments all came crashing down, all one third of the big building.

“Run!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly.

Qiao Qiao had turned pale and she struggled to command the Black Widow to run through the small gaps between the dense amounts of falling stones.

The Black Widow finally landed on the ground. Before them, the walls of the building have collapsed, blocking off an entire street!

This big building before them was like a giant wall with a height of over 10-metres.

At that very moment, the Black Widow's body staggered and it tilted over.

As it turned out, in the chaos earlier, the electrical bolt had swept past the Black Widow, tearing out two of its limbs. Its limbs had fallen off far away at an unknown location.

Having lost two of its limbs, the Black Widow was heavily injured. Its body tilted and was no longer capable of standing or running!

“Get down!”

Chen Xiaolian pulled Qiao Qiao down as Roddy carried Nicole down the Black Widow. Qiao Qiao then summoned back the Black Widow, turning it into a beam of light and into the system.

“There!”

Chen Xiaolian pointed at the left side of the road; there was a small alley there. The four of them hurried over. However, before they could run into the alley, a loud noise rang out!

The walls to the left of the alley burst apart! Stone fragments flew about and blocked off the entrance to the alley.

Behind a Thunderstorm Tank, a player wearing combat suit sneered as he kept aside the launcher he was carrying on his shoulder.

“Kill them!”

The beefy Team Leader revealed a fearsome smile. “You ruined one of my Thunderstorm Tanks. Don't even think about getting away!”

He had already jumped down from the tank and was moving across the road. He carried a firearm in his hand.

“Put me down!”

Nicole coughed out blood and struggled for a moment to break free from Roddy's hold. Then, she produced a flashing red crystal from the

chest area of her broken Mech armour, which she firmly crushed. “Find a way to hold out for 10 seconds!”

Ten seconds?

Qiao Qiao and Roddy were surprised by Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate. “Listen to her!”

He quickly moved to the side where a parking pole was placed. Chen Xiaolian used his axe to chop down the pole before savagely throwing it forward!

The metal pole arced through the air in the direction of the beefy Team Leader. The Team Leader laughed out hideously and shot out.

The barrel of the gun released a blue coloured light and directly disintegrated the parking pole.

At that moment, from the other side of the street, the gun sounds of “tat tat tat tat tat” was heard!

...

“Guild Leader! We are here to provide support!”

A Black Widow spider appeared in the intersection. Atop the Black Widow, Bei Tai was holding onto an assault rifle. The barrel of the rifle poured out bullets with wanton abandon. The barrage of bullets swept through the Thunderstorm Tank. Although the bullets only left small white dots on the surface of the Thunderstorm Tank, the beefy Team Leader who was standing beside the Thunderstorm Tank had to pull away his other team member and duck behind the tank for cover.

Beside Bei Tai, Lun Tai was carrying a rocket launcher on his shoulder!

“Rpg?”

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

A “boom” rang out and a rocket missile slammed onto the Thunderstorm Tank!

The flash from the resulting fire and explosion engulfed half the street!

“Get down!” Chen Xiaolian pressed Qiao Qiao down while Roddy who was behind them too, went down onto the ground.

Nicole’s face distorted. “It is useless! These conventional firearms cannot cause any harm to the Thunderstorm Tank! You need weapons of at least the electromagnetic level to achieve that.”

After the rocket exploded, the Thunderstorm Tanks were still standing. However, the resulting smoke and airflow stirred up the dust and gravel on the ground, blocking their view.

“Hurry up and run!” Chen Xiaolian pulled Qiao Qiao while Roddy did the same for Nicole. They bolted towards the side of the road, moving towards Bei Tai and Lun Tai.

Bei Tai had already tossed out several smoke bombs, letting them roll around in the middle of the road, creating a smokescreen to block the enemy’s line of sight.

At the same time, he continued spraying a hail of bullets with the assault rifle, covering for Chen Xiaolian and the others.

...

“Idiots!”

The beefy Team Leader stood behind a Thunderstorm Tank. “I detest these low-level ants the most.”

He immediately put on his helmet and activated the infrared vision device. The smoke could no longer affect him!

“Fire! Kill that Black Widow for me!”

The Thunderstorm Tanks instantly turned around. Their manoeuvring chassis’ were able to easily make a 360-degree turn. At the same time, two team members jumped down. They too, wore their helmets with infrared vision activated. The firearms fired out blue beams of light as they fired back at Bei Tai and Lun Tai!

“Charge forward!”

...

The enemy fire suppressed Bei Tai and the Black Widow rapidly turned around a corner. After the smoke cleared, the Thunderstorm Tanks quickly chased after them!

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian and the other three had already broken through the smoke and reached the intersection. The distance between them and the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were only less than 20 metres.

Behind them, however... a Thunderstorm Tank's turret muzzle has already turned over... the muzzle was aimed at the back of Chen Xiaolian's group of four...

...

Just then, a boom vibrated through the skies!

Amidst the thunderous roar, an object pierced its way down through the skies towards them! Behind it was a long flaming tail, just like those of a comet!

The beefy Team Leader heard a voice calling out from the headset:

"Falcon calling Team Leader! An aircraft is heading towards your coordinates! It's fast! It's very fast!"

The beefy Team Leader was shocked. An object descended from the skies and hovered above the street, placing itself between the Thunderstorm Tank and Chen Xiaolian's team of four!

It has an oddly shaped circular metal body, made of unknown materials, releasing a faint green glow. It seemed to be formed of two circular rings connected to each other, with the larger ring encasing the smaller ring!

Next, suddenly...

A "weng" sound rang out!

A translucent ripple suddenly burst out from the top of the circular ring, spreading out in a circular fashion. In just a blink of an eye, it diffused throughout the entire block like a shockwave!

All the infrared vision devices, as well as the other electronic combat

equipment that the Thorned Flower Guild's team members were wearing suddenly went dark!

Even the still moving Thunderstorm Tanks were affected. With a humming sound, the tanks died. The well-aimed turret muzzle froze in position before lowering down.

"Damn it! Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) wave! All electronic equipment has failed!"

One of the members cursed out loudly.

The beefy Team Leader was enraged and he emerged from behind the tank. He pulled the trigger of his firearms but it too, had failed!

Their arsenal was technologically of a higher level. However, technologically advanced weapons all depended on electronics. Under the Electromagnetic Pulse wave, all of them were rendered useless!

The beefy Team Leader furiously threw away his firearm. "Use the spare equipment!"

"We require 5 seconds to restart!" The members within the tanks reported.

...

At that instant, the hovering circular metal body suddenly moved forward. It moved close to Nicole!

"What is that thing?" Roddy asked as he looked blankly at the metal object.

"My pet... Floater!"

Nicole broke free of Roddy's supporting hand and quickly said. "Find a place to hide! There will be a huge pandemonium!"

"What?"

Roddy was flabbergasted. As for Nicole, she had already charged towards the circular metal object.

Then...

An overwhelming sight occurred!

The circular metal body suddenly broke into pieces, transforming into pieces of fragments! Then, they flew towards Nicole!

The broken Mech armour on Nicole's body fell off one after another. Some directly fused together with those pieces...

A brilliant mass of green radiance shone out, forcing everyone to turn their gaze away. When they turned around to look at Nicole...

Roddy stared with wide-open eyes, completely blown away by what he saw.

...

Nicole stood there, with a brand new metal armour on her body! The appearance of this armour was extremely awe-inspiring. Behind her, two long wings fluttered out!

Upon the silvery white armour, between the pair of wings, there was a flashing green light!

Nicole hovered in the middle of the air, the fully metallic armour completely enveloped her body. The pair of wings spread open and the several turbines behind her released a green coloured glow...

She floated up in the middle of the road, looking just like a...

Mech Angel!

Chapter 117: Inspector

“This... this is...” Chen Xiaolian stared at Nicole and mumbled.

Roddy exhaled, eyes shining. “Mech armour! That is a soldier-type Mech armour!”

...

The beefy Team Leader was flabbergasted!

“... floating... floating... angel! This senior actually encountered a ‘Floating Angel’,” The Team Leader’s expression distorted and fear was revealed within his eyes. He suddenly roared out. “Fire! Hurry up and fire! This fellow is a ‘Floating Angel’!”

The Thunderstorm Tanks’ electronic equipment have been restarted and their power supply rose rapidly! Their turrets rose once more and aimed directly at Nicole!

Nicole seemed unaware of this; her body remained immobile as she hovered in place.

Then, the Thunderstorm Tanks released an explosive boom!

The flat turret muzzle blasted out a blue coloured electrical bolt!

As the bolt arced towards Nicole head-on, the pair of wings on her back suddenly shrank, enveloping Nicole’s body....

The moment the bolts of lightning exploded, the pair of wings encompassing Nicole’s body shone out with a green radiance.

The pair of wings blocked all the electrical bolts!

The electrical bolts capable of levelling an entire building in one blast could not leave a single trace on the surface of Nicole’s body!

The electrical currents collapsed and dissipated. Some were absorbed directly into Nicole’s pair of wings.

“Damn!”

The Team Leader cursed loudly and howled. “Abandon the tanks!

Everyone abandon the tanks! Hurry up and get out!”

Just then, the eyes component upon the visor on Nicole’s face suddenly lit up. Two green coloured lights suddenly shone out!

Shua!

A green coloured flame abruptly burst out from Nicole’s right hand.

That green-coloured flame was shaped like... a sword!

...

“Ionic Shock weaponry...” Roddy was practically salivating. “This is a genuine Mech armour! A genuine Mech armour!”

...

Nicole moved!

Nicole’s body seemed so small compared to the colossal Thunderstorm Tanks. However, she made her move!

The turbine behind her sprayed out green coloured dots of light and her entire body transformed into a beam of light, shining towards the Thunderstorm Tanks!

That diminutive body charged straight into the gigantic monstrosities.

In the blink of an eye, the distance between them was closed.

Nicole raised her right hand.

Her hand rose up...

The sword descended!

...

Nicole’s figure seemingly shot past a Thunderstorm Tank.

Then, after flying for a distance of over 10 metres, she stopped. Behind her...

The Thunderstorm Tank issued out a loud noise!

The first was the turret muzzle; it suddenly split into two! Next, was the

body...

The Thunderstorm Tank was sliced in half! Subsequently, it exploded! The roaring orange coloured flames from the explosion enveloped half the street!

As the tank was exploding, its turret flew up into the skies.

The beefy Team Leader who was standing beside the tank had no time to utter even a single sound of fury before the flames inundated him, blasting him to smithereens!

...

“Float... floating... Floating Angel!”

Somewhere high above the skies of Tokyo, Falcon was hovering in the skies.

After receiving that last video transmission, only silence remained, not a single sound could be heard.

Inside his mask, droplets of cold sweat slowly dripped down through Falcon’s nose; his face distorted.

Falcon gasped for breath, even his body had turned stiff.

Finally, after a few seconds have passed, he rechecked his monitor. Several dots of light representing members of his side had already disappeared.

A few seconds later, Falcon made his decision.

“Falcon calling through special channel, Falcon calling through special channel.”

After a moment of silence, a voice replied from the headset.

“Special channel reception is normal, go ahead,” The voice was cold and seemingly carried a creaking sound of metal with it.

“This is Falcon from Team C calling ‘Inspector’. An emergency situation has arisen.”

There was a moment of silence before the answer came through the

headset. “What happened?”

“Team C has suffered from serious battle damage. Team Leader is dead; eight team members dead, two Thunderstorm Tanks lost. At present, there are four surviving members and one Thunderstorm Tank remaining.”

The Inspector’s voice was cold. “Who did this?”

“... its... according to the last received image, we, we may have encountered... encountered... a Floating Angel!”

There was another moment of silence.

Falcon’s heart had already sunk and he could feel his body quivering.

At last, the Inspector replied.

“Following the guild protocols, by the authority vested onto me, the Inspector by the Guild Leader, I will now temporarily take over command of this instance dungeon. I command all surviving members of Team C to execute defensive procedures. Cancel all predetermined plans of attack and have them all retreat to the safe house for standby.”

“Stand... standby?” Falcon swallowed his saliva.

“Idiot, do you still not understand? Your quest has ended with failure! You have disgraced Thorned Flower’s reputation!”

“But... after all, the opponent is a Floating Angel...”

The Inspector replied with a trace of ridicule in his voice. “A Floating Angel is indeed something that you fellows from Team C cannot fight against. However, before encountering the enemy, you did not determine the enemy’s identity and started firing hastily. This reckless and idiotic action is unacceptable!”

“... yes,” Falcon replied in a disheartened voice.

“Carry out my orders! Your quest is temporarily suspended! The Guild Leader will figure something out to deal with the system punishment. As for what will happen in the future... wait for our Guild Leader’s decision.”

“... yes.”

After the conversation was over, Falcon let out a long sigh, his expression gloomy.

...

... ..

“Truly idiotic.”

Within a corner of a high-class restaurant in Hachioji City, Tokyo...

A robust middle-aged man tossed a headset onto the surface of a table. Then, he picked up a knife and fork and continued enjoying the high-grade steak before him.

The steak was half done. As the knife cut into it, blood trickled out from it.

However, the robust man ate it with joy, chewing one large bite after another. After swallowing the last piece, he reached for the glass of red wine beside him and drank a mouthful from it. Then, he used the napkin to wipe his mouth and exhaled.

“I’m full, it’s time to work.”

He stood up.

He was nearly 2-metres tall with broad shoulders and a sturdy frame! His standing figure resembled that of a huge brown bear!

Such a muscular figure was rare even for Caucasians. However, his face revealed that he was an Asian.

An elegant music piece played within the restaurant. The music came from the middle of the restaurant, where a young female musician in a dress was playing the piano, her face pale and filled with fear.

“Waiter.”

The robust man snapped his fingers and a terrified waiter walked over, his face filled with cold sweat. His body trembled. “You, you, you...”

“Bill please.”

The waiter's teeth chattered and he was unable to say anything.

The robust man glanced at him and smirked. His face was so fierce that even when smiling, he looked just as savage.

He produced a wallet and retrieved a wad of bills, tossing them on the table before leaving. As he was walking past the waiter, the waiter's body turned soft and he fell to his knees.

The robust man walked towards the door of the restaurant. Along the way, his feet stepped through pools of blood!

Over tens of corpses littered the floor of the restaurant, all the way to the entrance!

Judging by their clothing, they were the waiters of the restaurant. There were also security members of the hotel and even police officers!

The corpses were mostly mutilated. Broken limbs were littered all over the place, suggesting that these people were ripped to death by a ferocious beast!

The robust man walked past the piano in the central area and suddenly stopped. He turned around and regarded the musician playing the piano.

The female musician instantly broke out in tears and cried out shakily. "Don't... don't... I beg you, please don't kill me.... don't..."

"Almost forgot one thing."

The robust man stepped beside the piano, produced a hundred US dollar bill and placed it gently on a plate. "Your tip."

Pausing, he smirked, revealing that terrifyingly hideous smile and said. "You played well, but you made a mistake in the second chapter on the fourth and ninth section. Were you too scared?"

The female musician cried and dared not say anything.

"Truth be told, you don't have to be afraid. I have this habit..." The man laughed. "I do not kill women."

Laughing loudly, the robust man turned around and walked out through

the restaurant door.

Behind him, sobbing sounds burst out from the restaurant.

...

The street was in ruins. Two police cars burned beside the street while the police officers lay dead on the side. Their state of death was extremely gruesome.

“I just wanted to eat steak. Why do you have to come disturb me when I am dining?” The robust man sneered and walked through the street. He then randomly picked a car that was abandoned by the street. He extended his hand and tore out the door of the car! After that, he tossed the door far away!

Getting into the car, he searched around and found spare key within the locker in front of the first passenger seat.

After starting up the car, the robust man suddenly recalled something. “Ah, I nearly forgot the safety belt. Never forget, safety first.”

After wearing the safety belt, the robust man started up the car and charged into the street like a wild beast!

He pressed the headset and spoke out softly.

“Message! I am in the Tokyo instance dungeon and could not get in contact with the outside world. I will leave a message to report the situation. At present, Team C had encountered a Floating Angel and their quest ended with failure. I have temporarily taken over command. I am now moving to... kill the Floating Angel! Guild Leader Chen [1], by the time you hear this message, if I got careless and end up being killed, please avenge me! Err... hahahaha! Guild Leader, I am joking! Just ignore that last part! A mere Floating Angel. It's not as if I have never killed one. End of message.”

—

1 Augustine Chen, Guild Leader of the Thorned Flower Guild. First appeared in Chapter 107.

Chapter 118: Wanted

The flames from the explosion gradually dispersed. Chen Xiaolian and his group got up from the ground and were greeted by the sight of the demolished Thunderstorm Tank. All that was left of the tank was debris on the ground.

There were also some broken limbs littering the ground and the corpses were incomplete. Chen Xiaolian quickly extended his hand to cover Qiao Qiao's eyes.

Roddy exclaimed in surprise and pointed towards the middle of the road...

...

Nicole laid there. The angel like war armour on her body had disappeared and returned to its metal ring shape. The Floater hovered beside her.

Apparently, with the disappearance of the green coloured glow upon its surface, it appeared to have... shut down. It hovered silently without making a single movement.

Then, with a "bang", the object... disappeared!

As for Nicole, she had fallen on the ground and both her eyes were closed.

Roddy hastily rushed over.

...

Chen Xiaolian paid no heed to Roddy's actions.

He looked at the ground and searched. Then, he caught sight of a severed corpse.

The upper half of the corpse had disappeared and Chen Xiaolian kicked away the lower half of the corpse. On the ground was the item that he was looking for.

Three energy sources!

Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation and quickly moved to pick them up.

“There fellows are impressive. The instance dungeon had only just started, yet they managed to get their hands on so many energy sources!” Chen Xiaolian silently praised.

He turned to regard the incinerated fragments of the Thunderstorm Tank and inadvertently caught sight of a pattern upon them.

Chen Xiaolian rubbed away the charred area.

“Huh? What kind of flower is this?”

...

Chen Xiaolian did not choose to hang around and quickly led the rest of them away from the street area.

They could no longer return to the hotel.

Their stay in this block had resulted in explosions and the collapse of big buildings. Even if the police forces of Tokyo were in a state of chaos, it was only a matter of time before the government sent an armed force to this area.

Chen Xiaolian had no interest in starting another firefight with the Japanese armed forces.

Bei Tai and Lun Tai emerged from the corner of the street on foot, while Soo Soo and Xia Xiaolei sat atop the Black Widow.

“Didn’t I tell you guys to go hide?” Chen Xiaolian walked over. Both his expression and posture revealed a higher level of friendliness. Regardless, these two brothers had charged out to provide assistance during such a critical moment. Even if their assistance failed to achieve much, such intentions to help were rare.

Lun Tai gave a faint smile. “We are a guild. We brothers could not possibly just stand by and watch as you all go fight with your lives on the line. Besides...” He pointed at Soo Soo. “This little girl persistently insisted on coming for you. Since she had already summoned out the Black

Widow, we could not possibly allow her to come alone, right?"

Qiao Qiao had already moved over to embrace Soo Soo, holding her hands tightly. Chen Xiaolian walked over as well. As he bent down, he realized that there was something wrong with her face.

Err...

This little girl's face showed no trace of fear and cowardice.

Her pair of black eyes looked at Chen Xiaolian in the eye with an indifferent and cold expression.

"Err... second personality?"

Soo Soo silently nodded her head.

Well... it appeared that this little girl had at an unknown moment switched to her second personality without them realizing.

"Hmm?"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly turned his attention to the system radar. There, another golden blip had appeared!

He had just retrieved the energy sources beside the charred wreckage of the Thunderstorm Tank when the system assigned him another target location at random.

"There is quite some distance in between," Chen Xiaolian examined the map of the radar. The location of the target appeared to be close to the Port of Tokyo.

However, do we want to go snatch it?

Chen Xiaolian turned his head and glanced at Nicole.

He then walked to face her.

"Xiaolian?" Roddy raised his head to look at Chen Xiaolian, appearing hesitant to say anything.

"Roddy, carry her. We are leaving this place..." Chen Xiaolian quickly said.

Seeing the complicated expression on Roddy's face, Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "I will not hurt her as long as she is willing to cooperate."

"We need to leave this place as soon as possible!" Lun Tai shouted loudly. "Half of this street area has been levelled! The armed forces of the Japanese government will be coming here soon. There is no need for us to engage the Japanese police officers or their army."

"Yes," Chen Xiaolian nodded. "We cannot use cars. As of now, the main roads are all blocked. If we use cars, we will encounter the police force and become easy targets. We will have to walk. First, leave this commercial district and think of a way to enter the residential district. There, we can find a place to hide for a while."

Chen Xiaolian retrieved the map, examined it for a moment, and got their bearings before leading the others away from this ruined street area.

After having moved on foot for less than 500 metres, shrill siren sounds rang out from behind them. The roar of helicopter engines resounded from the skies above. Raising their heads, they saw two helicopters moving in from afar. They could clearly see weapons installed onto those two helicopters, which also bore the painting of the Japanese flag.

"Get off the streets!" Chen Xiaolian shouted hastily. Coincidentally, there was an underground tunnel before them. The tunnel appeared to be leading to a certain underground plaza. He pointed at the entrance stairs. "Come here!"

...

...

One hour later, all pedestrians have moved far away from the street area.

The chaos in Tokyo had reached its climax. As for Chen Xiaolian and his team, they kept walking until they reached another street area.

The other streets were also deserted, devoid of any human presence.

As they walked through an intersection, a large digital screen was

showing the news. The anchor for the official news media was reporting about the chaos engulfing Tokyo. The anchor cautioned everyone over and over again that it was best for them to stay at home and wait for government assistance.

At the same time, some of the news report revealed that within some residential districts, chaos has erupted and acts of vandalism were being committed.

The police forces of Tokyo were in a miserable state. The government announced that Tokyo might be suffering from a large-scale terrorist attack.

Chen Xiaolian even saw himself in the news!

The screen cut to the earlier scene with the three of them driving the Type 10 tank out of the Metropolitan Police Department. The part where they flattened the police cars and rampaged through everything in their path was displayed!

But that was not all.

Chen Xiaolian broke into a bitter smile as he watched the screen. The video shown on the screen had jumped to the scene within the Metropolitan Police Department!

Clearly, there were video surveillances within the Metropolitan Police Department building.

The video displayed the part where three men rushed through the Metropolitan Police Department building... the one in front totting the M16 and shooting it was obviously Bei Tai. Behind him was Chen Xiaolian, holding onto the Bone Crusher Axe.

There was also Roddy, who held onto a katana while looking around.

“Damn... we are wanted now!”

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile.

The Tokyo police force sure was efficient though. Through the appearance displayed within the video surveillance footage alone, they

had immediately determined their identities!

Nationality, age, name, entry time, all of them were pinpointed!

“Damn!” Roddy’s eyes bulged out. “We are now wanted by the Japanese police? What do we do?”

“Don’t be afraid. Once the instance dungeon is completed, everything will be refreshed. You will not truly become a wanted man,” Lun Tai comforted him.

...

There were also some reports on other images of the many districts in Tokyo, which suffered from unexplained large-scale explosions and disastrous fires... Chen Xiaolian judged that these must be the result from the battles between either Awakened ones or Players.

The police had already mobilized all their armed forces out – however, this huge city of Tokyo was now infested with who knew how many Awakened ones and Players. Their capabilities were in no way inferior to Chen Xiaolian. With people like these wantonly starting a bloodbath, all the police officers could do was to cough out mouthfuls of blood.

It was said that the government had ordered the Self Defence Force to rush over.

After walking for another half an hour, Chen Xiaolian and his group reached a street area. At the end of the street, a few police cars were stationed and several teams of armed forces blocked off the area.

Clearly, the police could only block off the streets to some of the districts embroiled in chaos. With the limited number of police officers, they did their best to separate the chaotic districts and the safe districts apart.

Chen Xiaolian did not start a fight with these police officers. Instead, he led his group around through two other streets, bypassing the blockade by the police. Then, they entered a quiet residential area.

...

“Now what? You fellows are now wanted, hotels are out of the question. Once we appear in public, the armed government forces will come at us,” Qiao Qiao asked Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and suddenly raised his head.

At that moment, they had reached a high slope. Standing upon the ramp of the slope, they looked forward to see an area filled with residential houses...

The area was not filled with high-rise buildings found in the commercial districts in the centre of the city. Two or three-storey residential homes lined up on both sides of the streets there. Observing the area from the tall slope, the streets intersected each other and the majority of the residential homes had nothing to do with the word ‘luxurious’.

Let’s put it this way, that was a very... ordinary residential district.

...

“Just find a family and stay at their house temporarily,” Lun Tai smirked. “We are leaving first thing tomorrow anyways. If it comes to it, we’ll just throw some money at them.”

Just then, a loud engine sound roared out from behind. Their group was standing beside the road; they turned their heads to see a group of youngsters howling as they rode motorbikes past the area. Their clothing was of miscellaneous mix and their hairs were dyed in varying colours. Some of them howled out arrogantly.

Others had the skeletal image of a skull painted on their helmets.

These youngsters howled loudly as they rode past, throwing a ruckus within this residential district. They acted as though this was an uninhabited area.

Watching this group of people ride past, Chen Xiaolian was surprised. “Is this the Japanese biker gang?”

“... sure seems like it.”

“Hmm, there does not appear to be a big difference between them and the punks of our country.”

“Let’s go. First, find a place to buy some food and water,” Chen Xiaolian thought and said. “The things we bought earlier have all been left behind at the hotel.”

“There appears to be a store in front.”

Roddy pointed to the distance.

Chapter 119: Unfortunate Nicole

It would be more accurate to call it a small gas station.

The clamouring biker gang from earlier had stopped there to refuel their motorbikes in the station.

A few of those fellows who looked like delinquents carried baseball bats and assumed a gait, which they thought was cool as they walked into the convenience store. They howled loudly and waved the baseball bat towards the nearby window, smashing it!

Almost immediately, a shop assistant cried out after being struck by a bat and fell down to the ground.

Two of the delinquents gradually became more excited and the expression on their faces twisted. Howling, they brandished the baseball bat around, turning the convenience store into a mess. Only after that, did they become satisfied and swaggered out the door of the convenience store.

It was then that a scream was uttered from the outside.

Several members of the biker gang forced a gas station assistant who wore a baseball cap into a corner. She cried out continuously. Looking at the obscene and debased expression on the biker gang members' faces, one could tell that they have been attracted.

Chi!

They tore a hole on the female shop assistant's outer clothes before shoving her to the ground. The baseball cap that she wore was tossed to the side and two mobsters walked over. One of them held down her hands while the other held down her legs. The remaining gang member sported a little moustache and a Mohawk hairstyle. He gave a sinister smile as he walked forward, his hands moving to undo his zippers.

It was at that moment that a powerful force suddenly slammed over from behind him!

The body of the man with little moustache was sent flying and he

smashed onto a motorbike!

Next, the two fellows holding down the girl's hands and feet were each sent flying as well. They flew a distance of 5 to 6 metres and fell into the convenience store.

Qiao Qiao brushed her hands and regarded the two mobsters that she sent flying with her kicks and gritted her teeth. "I have no interest in stopping your acts of vandalism. But, you dared disgrace a girl before me; that is unacceptable."

After saying that, Qiao Qiao extended her hand to the terrified shop assistant and pulled her up. "Are you all right?"

The female shop assistant trembled before letting out a wail of "wahh".

Qiao Qiao moved closer and realized that this girl was very young. She was likely only about 15 or 16 years old. Clearly, she was a working high school student.

Her oval shaped face was pure and pleasant to the eye. This Japanese girl's petite body and prominent ears made her the embodiment of perfection.

"What is your name?"

"... Takeuchi Mikiko," The girl answered cautiously and looked at Qiao Qiao timidly. The atmosphere exuded by this beautiful girl caused her to instinctively feel fearful. This sister was so beautiful, sporting such a long straight hair; she was simply far more beautiful than the number one beauty in Takeuchi Mikiko's school from the kendo club! This atmosphere that she carried with her caused Takeuchi Mikiko to blush and involuntarily answer her question. Any trace of resistance within Takeuchi Mikiko's heart was put down.

"All right, there is no need to be afraid. Those fellows will not be bullying you," Qiao Qiao said softly. "Do you need me to help report to the police?"

"... ah, no!" Takeuchi Mikiko quickly answered. "These fellows had already been here before in the morning. Back then, we had reported to

the police. So, they came back for revenge. At the current, the police forces are in a state of chaos. The news report states that the police forces have been sent into the central area of the city. How can they still care about our place.”

“Or should we call up your family?” Qiao Qiao squinted her eyes.

“... no need,” For a moment, Takeuchi Mikiko’s eyes turned noticeably dim. Then, she gripped onto the torn clothes and, with a rather embarrassed look, made a bow towards Qiao Qiao. “Thank you very much, thank you very much!”

Qiao Qiao looked to the side.

Chen Xiaolian and the others have already begun moving some stuff out from convenience store: food, water. One basket after another was brought out.

Roddy moved over and kicked aside the man with the little moustache that Qiao Qiao sent flying earlier. He propped up a motorcycle and activated his Mechanical Heart. Instantly, the motorcycle was started and he drove it around the gas station.

“How old are you?” Qiao Qiao retracted her gaze.

Takeuchi Mikiko was clearly displaying fear. She had observed how this girl’s companions were moving supplies from the convenience store. Each of them revealed cold and indifferent expressions... they even have a little girl with them who seemed to be only 9 or 10 years old. However, the little girl’s expression was also cold. Especially when she turned to face Takeuchi Mikiko; the frosty gaze from her caused Takeuchi Mikiko’s heart to trickle with sweat.

“I am... 15 years old,” Takeuchi Mikiko replied in a rather absent-minded manner.

Qiao Qiao gave a soft smile. “My friends are not bad people. You can be rest assured. Oh, right, they will pay for the things they took from the store.”

“Yes! Thank you very much for that,” Takeuchi Mikiko felt relieved and

bowed successively. “The boss uncle is a good man. He has always been good to us.”

“You are a good girl,” Qiao Qiao smiled. Suddenly, she asked. “Right, is your house nearby?”

“Eh?”

...

... ..

Nicole opened her eyes, her consciousness flowing back into her body. This female pilot immediately sat up straight and her eyes flickered as she examined her surroundings.

Chen Xiaolian sat by the door, staring calmly at Nicole. He noted that after waking up, Nicole had subconsciously moved to check if she was properly clothed. Although it was a minor subconscious move, it made Chen Xiaolian chuckle inwardly.

No matter how powerful or experienced this master amongst Awakened ones may be – she was still a woman.

“You are awake?”

Chen Xiaolian stood up.

“...” Nicole silently regarded Chen Xiaolian and suddenly spoke out in a cold manner. “The war armour on my body...”

“Qiao Qiao is the one who helped take off the broken war armour – don’t worry, she is my girlfriend. Of course, the idiot Roddy would not have allowed any males to touch you. Haha!”

Nicole’s eyes eased a little. “That last sentence is not funny at all.”

“Very well, then let’s not joke around,” Chen Xiaolian replied coldly. “Let’s talk business.”

Naturally, Nicole understood what Chen Xiaolian meant. “The two energy sources that I snatched away from you, I can give it back.”

Chen Xiaolian replied with indifference. “You have another three on

you. I could have taken advantage of the time when you were unconscious to kill you. Then, all your energy sources would have become ours.”

“If so, you will be blacklisted by Zero City,” Nicole retorted coldly. “You can forget about re-entering Zero City for the rest of your life.”

“That is not fair at all,” Chen Xiaolian sneered. “You can attack us, but we cannot harm you?”

“Fair? What a laughable notion you have,” Nicole replied with indifference. “Zero City has a rule: Killing of those with qualifications to permanent residency in Zero City is not allowed. When within the game, you may engage in fights and conflicts with these people... as long as you do not kill them, that is fine. The permanent residents of Zero City are granted protection by Zero City itself. In other words, when in game, if you were to find yourself in the opposing side where conflicts are inevitable, you can attack me and engage in a battle with me. However, you cannot kill me. Don’t spout things like fair or not to me, this game has always been a survival of the fittest.”

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned. Then, Lun Tai, who had been seated on the other side of the door walked in and nodded his head. “She is not lying. This rule does exist. When in game, if we encounter people from Zero City and find ourselves in the opposing side, we can engage in battles with them as long as we do not kill them. Once you kill someone from Zero City, you will be blacklisted – naturally, if you do so secretly and no one finds out, then...”

As he said those words, Lun Tai deliberately revealed a ferocious smile.

Nicole eyes showed no panic at all and she pointed towards her forehead. “There is a chip implanted into my brain. It is a visual capturing system. Everything that I encounter within this instance dungeon, all that my eyes have seen will be recorded. Those records will continuously be sent to a storage device.

“The moment I entered this instance dungeon, I had placed the storage device within this instance dungeon. It will automatically hide itself. In the event that I die, after the instance dungeon is over and the restriction

placed on the instance dungeon area is lifted, it will automatically transmit all the visually captured information to Zero City.”

“Beautiful,” Chen Xiaolian was unable to help himself and uttered out a praise. “It seems your safety measures are quite strict.”

“Did you think people of Zero City have no fear towards death?” Nicole curled the corners of her lips. “All right, enough nonsense. I believe we are tight on time. Let’s talk about something else.”

“Why are you in this instance dungeon?”

“... I was forced in due to a misfortune. When you were leaving, I was actually there, inside one of the four Mechs,” Nicole did not conceal anything regarding this trivial information. “Then, I received a routine task to patrol the outside area of Zero City’s Entrance and Exit Gate to determine that it is safe. However, after I left Zero City and moved into Tokyo City, I was forced into the instance dungeon.”

“Why didn’t you just return to Zero City?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“Not enough time,” Nicole hesitated for a moment. Then, she finally revealed a more sensitive information. “I am a member of the security personnel. I left Zero City using a temporarily opened passageway. This temporarily opened passageway is opened at random, leading to a random destination. Once I walked out of this passageway, it would close up instantly. When I want to return, I will contact Zero City and they will open up another temporary passageway for me to return. The location of this temporary passageway cannot be accurately placed and there will generally be a discrepancy in distance of roughly 1 km.

“The very moment I walked out of the passageway, I received the system notification and realized that I have been stranded within an instance dungeon area. Back then... the remaining time before the instance dungeon began was... 9 seconds. There was insufficient time for me to go back... that would require contacting Zero City to open up a passageway for me. Then, I would still need to rush to the location of the passageway... all of those cannot be accomplished in a mere 9 seconds.”

As she was mentioning what happened in the end, Nicole’s expression

turned aggrieved.

Nine seconds left in the countdown timer...

—

Takeuchi Mikiko, raw: ‘竹内美紀子’, pinyin: ‘zhú nèi měi jì zǐ’.

Chapter 120: Transaction Proposal

Chen Xiaolian was at a loss as to whether he should be laughing or sympathizing with this female pilot.

By comparison, when his team had been forced into this instance dungeon, there was still over 20 minutes of time. They were comparatively much luckier.

“I only have 4 energy sources on me. My own energy source cannot be moved, so I did not take it with me,” Nicole said softly.

“You entered this instance dungeon alone, and yet you came out to snatch our energy source? Are you not afraid that your own energy source would be snatched away?”

Nicole’s face was strange as she turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. “When fighting alone, I could only choose to leave my pet to protect the energy source. En, it is the ‘Floater’ that you all saw back then. That is my pet.

“In the end, I had no choice but to summon Floater to my side in order to deal with those people from the Thorned Flower Guild. Thus... I fear that my energy source has been snatched away by now.”

Lun Tai spoke out. “You are... a member of the ‘Floating Angels’?”

“Floating Angels, what is that?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

“The name of a guild,” Lun Tai shook his head. “Let me put it this way. Those with permanent residence in Zero City can be divided into two types.

“The first type is those top guilds with the qualifications to permanent residence in Zero City. However, they could actually be viewed as guests with the qualification to station themselves within Zero City for the long-term. They are not the true owners of Zero City. One such example is the owner of the Tourist Lodge, Rodriar Guild.

“The second type is the governing body of Zero City. These people, such as Miss Nicole before us are Zero City’s governing officials. Generally speaking, this governing organization within Zero City is very big. The

highest authority rests in the hands of the management committee, commonly known as the Board of Patriarchs. The Board of Patriarchs controls everything within Zero City, be it daily management, allocation of resources, military defence, all business matters etc.

“You must understand. Even those people in Zero City cannot hide from the system’s instance dungeon forever.

“Even though Zero City is equipped with a blocking function, from what I heard, this function is somewhat flawed! As an outsider, I do not know of the details. However, I do know this. Even though Zero City has a blocking function, the people within Zero City must still come out often to participate in instance dungeons!

“Therefore, due to the need to participate in the battles that occur within instance dungeons, the governing organization in Zero City established their own guilds.

“One such example is this ‘Floating Angels’. I hear that they are one of the war guilds amongst Zero City’s security personnel. This guild was established by members of the security personnel. These Awakened ones are all people with mechanical and technological skills.

“Zero City’s governing organization has many other guilds besides them. The staff members from Zero City’s governing organization were the ones who established all those guilds. For example, I know that the Military Arms Department and the Services Office have their own respective guilds. Even the Intelligence Department have their own guild.

“As for the Floating Angels, they are a more renowned guild. The reason for that is that they hail from the security personnel. Theoretically speaking, they could be considered as a paramilitary organization and their battle strength would be more outstanding. Thus, they have a considerable amount of fame amongst the circle of Awakened ones.”

After saying that, Lun Tai asked out of curiosity. “Miss Nicole, the Guild Leader of your Floating Angels should be the Head of the Security Team, right? At the same time, that person is also one of the members of the management committee, the Board of Patriarchs, am I right?”

“You know quite a lot,” Nicole laughed out. “I find it strange. Why is the leader of your guild not a veteran like you and is instead a young rookie like him?”

After saying that, she deliberately paused her gaze for a brief moment on both Chen Xiaolian and Lun Tai.

Chen Xiaolian smiled. “Are you trying to sow discord right now?”

Nicole’s eyes then regarded the surroundings of the room.

It was a standard Japanese-style house. The room was not large and could be considered somewhat narrow. The room was also devoid of tables or chairs. Its floor was made of tatami and there was a cabinet to the side. A table lamp rested at a corner of the room – that was all.

The room was very simplistic and somewhat worn.

“This is quite a good place,” Nicole thought for a moment and turned to face Chen Xiaolian. She noticed that Chen Xiaolian’s hand was gripping onto the Bone Crusher Axe. “There is no need to be anxious. I currently do not have any battle strength. I am a pilot with technological abilities. Without any equipment, my battle strength is not strong. At the very least, I am not good at using cold weapons.”

“Your Floater is very powerful,” Chen Xiaolian replied softly. “Heaven knows if you can summon it out again. We witnessed with our own eyes how you transformed and hacked apart that Thunderstorm Tank in one explosive slash.”

Pausing, he then continued. “By the way, that Floater... is it a form of armour suit that can be worn? Like Ironman?”

“Floater is my pet!” Nicole scowled. “He is not a suit of armour! Floater is a mechanical life form!”

“Just like the Transformers?”

“... .. you should cut down on movies,” Nicole bluntly replied in a cold manner.

“All right, all right. Now, give me what I want. You know what that is.”

Having said that, Chen Xiaolian turned around and brought a pile of items that was placed outside the door.

That pile of items turned out to be the damaged mechanical suit of armour, which was taken off Nicole's body.

Nicole was silent as she walked over and regarded the damaged suit of armour. Her expression turned somewhat clouded. "My loss this time is truly big."

After muttering those words, she utilized an unknown method to open a slot upon the suit of armour and retrieved two energy sources – those were the two energy sources she snatched from Chen Xiaolian's side.

Chen Xiaolian maintained a calm expression. However, his heart was nervous!

Earlier on, he had picked up three energy sources from beside the Thunderstorm Tank.

In addition to these two energy sources that Nicole was giving back to him, he has now completed the quest objective: Five energy sources!

As expected, directly after Chen Xiaolian accepted the two energy sources...

The system suddenly issued out a prompt.

[System prompt: Your team has completed the first phase of the quest, achieving the quest objective of 'Find 5 energy sources'].

[System prompt: According to system calculations, your team is the first team to complete the first phase of this instance dungeon's quest. The system will randomly reward you with a [B] Class reward. The reward will be sent to the Team Leader's Item Box. Please take note].

[System prompt: Due to your completion of the first phase of the quest, the 5 energy sources can now be kept within the system's Item Box. At the same time, your energy sources will no longer appear as targets to the other participants of this instance dungeon].

[System prompt: You have completed the first phase of the quest. The

second phase of the quest will be issued at the end of the countdown].

Chen Xiaolian let out a sigh of relief.

He quickly kept the five energy sources into the system's Item Box.

Observing Chen Xiaolian's actions, Nicole revealed a complicated expression. Suddenly, she laughed. "How ironic... those fellows from Thorned Flower suffered heavy losses and failed to complete the quest. As for me, I lost a war armour worth 2,000 points and still failed to complete the quest. Instead, a rookie like you managed to complete it... if I am not mistaken, you might even be the first to complete the quest? Is there any reward?"

"Yes," Chen Xiaolian did not conceal it. "[B] Class reward... for an expert like you, this should not be anything worth looking at, right?"

"Your luck is quite something," Nicole uttered softly. "In this game, strength is indeed a huge factor. But most of the time, one's luck can change the outcome."

She stood up. "Now, how do you plan to deal with me?"

"You are free, you can leave," Chen Xiaolian gave a faint smile.

However, Nicole did not move.

She looked at Chen Xiaolian. "How about we make a deal?"

"..." Chen Xiaolian looked at Nicole warily.

"The energy sources have been snatched by you and the current me only have two energy sources... add that to my own energy source – without my Floater's protection, I am uncertain as to whether or not the energy source has been snatched away. Additionally, only slightly more than 10 hours is left in the countdown. My current state is also not very good... my personal War Mech armour has been ruined. I will also need time to restore my battle strength... in other words, the probability of me finishing this first phase of the quest is extremely low. As such..."

"What are you trying to say?"

"I want to ask for a cooperation," Nicole said softly. "I will join your

guild – naturally, it will only be temporary. By joining your guild, I become one of your team members. By default, that makes me someone who has completed the first phase of the quest, allowing me to avoid system punishment. After that... while within this instance dungeon, I will fight alongside you and your team members. After this instance dungeon is over, I will leave your guild – at the same time, I will hand over all the loot I acquired from this instance dungeon. What do you think?”

“... would that work?” That was Chen Xiaolian’s first reaction. “Aren’t you a member of the so-called ‘Floating Angels Guild?’”

“I believe you have misunderstood something. Floating Angels is an organization, only a guild in name. It is an organization established by the members of Zero City’s security personnel. This organization is not registered as a guild within the Guild System. In other words, the system views me as a solo participant, one without any guild.”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

That worked?

The Floating Angels... is an organization in name only? They did not register a guild through the system?

“Why?” Chen Xiaolian became curious. “Why not register a guild? Wouldn’t that be disadvantageous?”

“The benefit of a guild is the autonomous authority to pick instance dungeons. The second benefit is the exclusive equipment for each guild,” Nicole said with indifference. “I am a member of Zero City. As you know, Zero City possesses a function that could block the system. Although this function has its flaws, in terms of the autonomous authority in picking instance dungeons, it far surpasses those provided by a guild. As for the guild’s exclusive equipment... hehe, do you think Zero City is lacking in those?”

Pausing, Nicole then continued in a low tone. “You probably do not know this... when a guild participates in an instance dungeon, if you compare it with individual participants, at the end when the instance dungeon is completed under similar conditions, the rewards given to the

individual participants will be far more generous compared to those given to the guild. Of course... individual participants will face a higher level of difficulty. However, we of the Floating Angels are brothers and sisters from the security force, with mutual trust in one another. That is why, when we are participating in an instance dungeon, even though we are not a guild by the system's standards, we possess a unity that exceeds other guilds."

Chen Xiaolian's heart tensed!

Chapter 121: Strongest Pet Beneath [S] Class

“Since we are making a deal, there will be giving and taking,” Nicole softly said. “By entering your guild, I can borrow the identity as a member of your team to complete the first phase of the quest and avoid the system punishment. That is the advantage that I will get.

“Likewise, I will bring an advantage to you all. The difficulty level of this instance dungeon is not low. I believe that the second or subsequent phases of the quest will be more difficult.

“My strength is not bad. After entering your guild, I will help you complete the second and subsequent phases of the quest. We all share the same goal after all. With my participation, I believe the level of difficulty for your team will be lessened.”

“How would I know that you are not trying to buy time in order to backstab us?” Chen Xiaolian asked coldly. “Perhaps you only require a few more hours to restore your battle strength... if so, you would be able to restore your battle strength before the first phase’s countdown ends and attack us to snatch away our energy sources.”

“What benefit would I get from doing so?” Nicole replied softly. “My objective is simply to complete the quest. Since I can do so by joining your guild, why would I want to start a fight?

“Well then, to allay your fears, I will tell you this... within a minimum of eighteen hours, I will not be able to restore my battle strength. My Floater... there is a restriction to his usage.”

Next, Nicole explained.

As a mechanical life form, the Floater was a type of War Pet.

The Floater was unquestionably very powerful!

According to the classification by the system, the Floater’s initial class was [A] Class. However, the Awakened ones and Players have their own

classification for the Floater and they granted it a special name: The King of machines beneath [S] Class!

As a mechanical life form, the Floater possessed countless advantages that other types of pets do not.

First and foremost, its outstanding cost performance: Mechanical pets do not require pet food and the Floater could recharge itself. Should it receive injuries, as a mechanical silicon-based life form, it also possessed self-mitotic division ability. Thus, a Floater can repair itself when harmed.

Next was its extensive application: As a silicon-based life form, the Floater possessed the ability to integrate with almost all forms of electrical and mechanical equipment. In other words, the Floater was a mechanical life form with transformation capabilities. It could ‘integrate’ with nearly all electronic and mechanical devices! For example, the scene that they witnessed earlier where Nicole had ‘transformed’ was also the Floater ‘integrating’ with the Mech armour on her body. The Floater’s powerful mechanical ability allowed it to control and strengthen Nicole’s own soldier-type Mech armour. Of course, the Floater was not limited to only integrating with the soldier-type Mech armour. When the need arose, it could also integrate with all other electronic and mechanical devices! From objects as small as an electronic watch to objects as big as aircrafts, tanks or even a spaceship... in simple terms, it was an electronic and mechanical artificial intelligent life form!

“In other words, if you let your Floater integrate with a car, you would be able to transform the car into a Transformer?” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes were bulging widely.

“Theoretically speaking, there is nothing wrong... but I would advise you to once again, watch less movies,” Nicole rolled up her eyes. “The volume of the integration target and the complexity involved in the restructuring will limit the Floater’s integration ability. If the Floater’s class is insufficient, it will only be able to integrate with some low-level electronic and mechanical devices.”

Additionally, Floater also came equipped with the ability to repair all electronic and mechanical equipment. For example, Nicole's ruined soldier-type War Mech armour. As long as the Floater can integrate with it, it will be repaired – naturally, this will lead to a loss of energy for the Floater.

The factor that aroused Chen Xiaolian's utmost envy was the Floater's personal ability.

As a mechanical life form, the Floater's initial setting was: All-rounder war-type mechanical life form.

In all weathers and all terrains! Versatility!

It could attack and defend, possessing the Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) wave and firepower! When the need arose, it could integrate with other electronic and mechanical equipment, transforming at any moment into a war fortress or a mode of transport.

"This type of pet is only [A] Class?" Chen Xiaolian's eyes were wide-open. "From your description, it should have the qualification to be an [S] Class!"

"Pets of the mechanical life form type face a huge limitation in the increment of their Growth Capacity! The number of options for the Devouring process is very limited. In addition, the number of mechanical life form pets within the system has always been scarce. The Floater is an [A] Class mechanical life form. The act of Devouring other mechanical life forms to upgrade its class is an extremely expensive move!"

Chen Xiaolian was puzzled.

When he was upgrading his Garfield, he did feel terrible; however, it was not unbearably expensive.

The present Garfield was at [A-] Class.

The items consumed for Garfield to upgrade itself through the Devouring process were:

From [B] to [B+], he used two [B] Class pet souls. (1 success, 1 failure.)

From [B+] to [A-], he used two [B] Class pet souls. (2 successes.)

From [A-] to [A], he still needed two more [B] Class souls. At present, Garfield's progress bar was at 50% and could not be fully upgraded. (2 successes, 1 failure.)

According to Chen Xiaolian's judgement, following this scale of Devouring process, to upgrade from [A] to [A+], eight pet souls would be sufficient. [1]

Theoretically speaking, for an [A+] Class pet to class up to [S-] Class ([S-] is considered close enough to the bottleneck of [S] Class, right?), it would require a total sum of only twelve [B] Class pet souls.

According to the market price of the flea market, the price of a [B] Class pet was somewhere in the range of 300 to 500 points.

For twelve [B] Class pets, the cost would only be at a maximum of 6,000 points.

For an expert veteran like Nicole, 6,000 points should not be too much, right?

Chen Xiaolian shared out his calculations with Nicole. After listening to him, Nicole's eyes were bulging out as she looked at him. Her expression even conveyed a certain amusement towards his words. "Your mind is really naïve. Have you never considered this one issue... if it's that easy to class up, why are [S] Class pets so scarce? For many players, gathering twelve [B] Class pets may not be an easy task, but it is not very hard either. As long as they can find some methods to participate in more instance dungeons and save up more, they will eventually achieve that target. If that is the case, don't you think [S] Class would become excessively cheap?"

"... err..." Chen Xiaolian was dumbfounded.

"Let me enlighten you! Upgrading from [A-] to [A] Class by Devouring four pets of the [B] Class is indeed possible.

"However, once [A] Class is reached, the restriction on the Devouring method to upgrade a pet's class will be increased!

“From [B] Class to [A] Class, you can use [B] Class pet souls for the Devouring process. However, above that, the system will not accept the Devouring of souls from the preceding class!

“This is the system’s rule for the upgrading process of pets.

“Upgrading through the Devouring process requires pet souls, and the lowest acceptable soul is the soul of the preceding class. Souls from an even lower class cannot be Devoured!

“From [A] Class to [A+] Class, you can forget about Devouring [B] Class pet souls! You will need nothing less than [A] Class pet souls!”

Next, Nicole informed Chen Xiaolian the required amount for the Devouring process to upgrade a pet from [A] Class to [S] Class, causing Chen Xiaolian to be severely shocked.

To upgrade [A] Class to [A+] Class, two [A] Class mechanical pet souls must be Devoured. To upgrade from [A+] Class to [S-] Class, four [A] Class souls must be Devoured! And from [S-] Class to [S] Class, eight [A] Class souls must be Devoured!

Chen Xiaolian was flabbergasted!

His Garfield was currently at [A-] Class. In order to upgrade it to [A] Class, he will only need to gather up another two Gryphon souls of the [B] Class.

Unexpectedly, for [A] Class and above, Gryphon souls would become useless! All pet souls from the [B] Class would become useless! The Devouring process required [A] Class to work!

According to this formula, to upgrade from [A] Class to [S] Class would require a total of fourteen [A] Class pet souls!

Fourteen argh!

According to the market price, an [A] Class pet was probably priced at around 2,000 points. Fourteen times that would be... 28,000 points!!!

Even for a veteran, this was an unbearably huge sum of expense! Perhaps, some veterans could save up that much after going through

countless instance dungeons... but, can you spend all your points on pet alone? Your own equipment, strength and others... do they not require enhancement? You can't simply rely on your pet to conquer the world!

Furthermore... theoretically speaking, fourteen [A] Class pets were needed; theoretically speaking, the price was at 2,000 points each.

But do not forget, [A] Class pets are not something you can buy just because you want to buy them!

Within Zero City, Chen Xiaolian had strolled around the flea market for two days and saw only one Black Widow for sale! Other [A] Class pets for sale were simply not found!

In other words, even if you are filthy rich, capable of forking out 28,000 points, you won't even be able to buy that many [A] Class pets!

Chen Xiaolian was disappointed. Originally, he had assumed he could quickly upgrade Garfield to become [S] Class... but now, his dream has been shattered.

Observing the highly shocked expression on Chen Xiaolian's face, Nicole softly said. "The cruelty of this game is something that you will slowly come to terms with. Enough, now is not the time for nonsense. Back to the main topic, will you accept my proposal?"

Chen Xiaolian sighed. He kept aside the distracting thoughts within his mind and focused himself. "I need to discuss this with my members for a while."

Nicole nodded her head. "I will wait for 15 minutes...I am not trying to urge you. It is just that my time is limited. If you reject my proposal, then I need to leave immediately and think of a method to complete my own quest. There is not much time left on the countdown."

This request from her was very reasonable. Chen Xiaolian nodded and moved out of the room.

...

"I feel that that is not a problem."

Chen Xiaolian was surprised. After he gathered the team and relayed Nicole's proposal, agreement for the proposal was immediately obtained – contrary to his expectations, there was no opposition to it.

The first to agree was Lun Tai.

As a veteran, Lun Tai gave a very good reason. "This game is a cruel one. Personal grudges and feelings is not that important. Theoretically speaking, as long as our common goal is the same, anyone could be accepted as allies in order to ensure our survival. Our biggest objective is to survive this instance dungeon! As for the conflicts from our earlier fight, that is simple the result of being on different sides. Since the system randomly assigned her to be our enemy, there was no way around it.

"Most importantly, we did not suffer any casualties. As such, I personally feel that this grudge can be put aside for now.

"Having an expert, a Floating Angel join us as a temporary team member will give our team's battle strength a huge boost!

"Just recall that scene where she hacked the Thunderstorm Tank apart with just one swing of her sword! Rather than make an enemy out of her, it is better to have someone like that as a comrade. The grudge between us is not that big anyways."

—

1 Considering how the lightly damaged Gryphon soul gave a success rate of 98.5% in Chapter 105, an undamaged soul should 'probably' have a success rate of 99% or more. So, unless you are someone that RNG hates to the core, or if you're playing Impossible Ironman mode, each Devouring process should be successful.

Chapter 122: Wicked Chen Xiaolian

Lun Tai's statement caused everyone to turn silent. Naturally, Bei Tai would not disagree with his brother's opinion. He immediately voted in favour of the proposal.

Xia Xiaolei said nothing. Chen Xiaolian then turned towards Qiao Qiao.

"I do not like that woman," Qiao Qiao revealed her stance. "However... Lun Tai's words are true; there is no profound hatred between us. Although there was a conflict earlier, we did not suffer any casualties. If we had, I would never accept her no matter what! However, since such is not the case... besides, back then, she was the one who destroyed the Thunderstorm Tanks in battle... on the whole, she is the one who saved us all.

"If this is just a temporary alliance, then I will not oppose. It's up to you."

Qiao Qiao's opinion was naturally also made on behalf of Soo Soo. Xia Xiaolei quickly spoke out, saying that he will follow the Guild Leader's decision.

The last to speak up was Roddy.

Roddy's face expressed helplessness. "Actually, I am the least qualified to give an opinion here. I am the reason why everyone had to participate in this instance dungeon. Additionally... the reason for that is also connected to Nicole. If I had not persistently requested to stay for one more day in Zero City in order to find Nicole, everyone would not..."

"Enough, no need to bring up the past," Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

Chen Xiaolian stared into Roddy's eyes. "Roddy, you are my friend. In fact, you could be considered as my best friend."

Chen Xiaolian gave a light sigh. "Back when I was chasing Qiao Qiao until the train station, you followed suit. Before the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang instance dungeon began, you took the risk to get close to Guild Leader Nangong and Qiu Yun... all those were under my behest. All those

matters were dangerous and yet, you agreed without so much as a frown.

“I know very well that deep down, you consider me as a bro. That is why when there is danger, you would be willing do those things to help me out.

“At the same time... I too consider you as a bro! Since that is the case, regarding this instance dungeon’s matter, let’s not talk about it again!”

Lun Tai nodded his head. “That is true... you simply made an unintentional mistake. Who could have guessed that the darned system would set the instance dungeon in Tokyo.”

“Then... my opinion is also... to agree with the proposal to temporarily accept Nicole.”

There was excitement within Roddy’s eyes as he gritted his teeth. “I am not of that opinion because of personal reasons. I will admit, she has indeed fascinated me before. However, the reason I am agreeing with this proposal is not based on that. Lun Tai’s words are correct. Since we did not incur huge losses, there is no profound hatred forged between us. Since that is the case, having a powerful comrade as a team member would give us a huge boost in battle strength. Maybe, this will help increase our chances of making it through this instance dungeon by a significant margin.”

Chen Xiaolian exhaled and he relaxed – personally, he was in agreement with this proposal as well.

“Since that is the case, we have a unanimous decision of accepting Nicole as a temporary team member by accepting her into our guild until the time comes when this instance dungeon ends.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian glanced at Qiao Qiao. “Everyone can keep resting... I have received the system’s notification. The first phase of the quest is completed. Before the countdown for the first phase is over, we will have those ten plus hours of time to rest and prepare. Additionally, the system will no longer display our energy sources to other participants. As long as we keep a low profile, the next ten plus hours will not be dangerous. Rest well and ease up a little.”

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to face Qiao Qiao. "Go check the Japanese girl and comfort her a little. We are not thieves after all."

Qiao Qiao nodded.

...

This Japanese-styled house was a small two-storey building with a slightly antiquated appearance.

It did not have a huge area and was separated into several small and narrow rooms.

Walking up the narrow stairs, Qiao Qiao opened up the door to the first room of the second floor.

Takeuchi Mikiko sat by the door, her face revealing panic and fear. Seeing Qiao Qiao walk in, she cried out in shock. She quickly turned around and shrank towards the corner of the walls, expressing panic on her small face. "Don't... don't hurt me. I beg you, please don't hurt me! Just take whatever you want from the house! I... I do not have any other belongings here, only the living expense of 100,000 yen [1] that my mother gave me. Just take it. I beg you, please don't hurt me!"

Qiao Qiao sighed and entered the room. She placed a tray onto the tatami floor.

There was a bowl of instant noodles on the tray.

"Eat something," Qiao Qiao sat cross-legged on the floor. "I will not hurt you, just relax."

Although Takeuchi Mikiko was still afraid, she could not restrain her eyes from darting towards the bowl of instant noodles.

She had not eaten anything during lunch. Presently, it was already evening and she had since been feeling hungry to the point where her stomach would growl from the hunger.

...

For Takeuchi Mikiko, she felt that today was a truly unfortunate day for her!

First, during noon where she was working, she saw from the TV news report that an explosion incident had occurred in Tokyo.

Next, she saw that the streets leading to the central district were filled with fire and thick billowing smoke. The place was filled with explosions and chaos.

Takeuchi Mikiko instantly turned fearful. She quickly called her mother, but her mother's phone could not be reached – as usual, her mother could not be reached during her working hours. Next, she called up her big sister. However, her phone too, could not be reached.

The convenience store owner decided to close up and return home – the news had advised the public that it was best for them to stay at home.

Takeuchi Mikiko too, was preparing to get off from work and return home. It was at that moment that the biker gang raided the gas station's convenience store.

Takeuchi Mikiko recognized those fellows. They were all bullies who lived in the neighbourhood. She heard that those fellows had joined some organization. Usually, they would only tease her when they were refilling their motorbikes, not daring to cross the line.

Today however... these fellows seemed to have gone mad.

It was likely due to the city area being embroiled in chaos to the point where the police were unable to spare anyone to come over. After vandalizing the store, those fellows had wanted to rape her as well!

Back then, the 15 years old Takeuchi Mikiko was on the verge of fainting from fear. Although she was struggling with all her might, her heart had already fallen into despair. She believed that she would not be able to escape calamity today.

Unexpectedly, this beautiful big sister with long black hair would descend from the skies and save her.

She must have trained in martial arts... she seemed even more powerful compared to the seniors of the judo club of her school! Her companions were also no different, beating off the biker gang members in just

moments.

Thinking that she had met a saviour, Takeuchi Mikiko was originally very grateful towards this beautiful big sister with long black hair.

However, what happened next caused this young girl to become utterly confused.

These saviours of her... actually...

Kidnapped her?

When this beautiful big sister with long black hair asked her where she lived – back then, she was filled with the feeling of gratitude and simply answered the question without withholding anything.

Next... she was knocked unconscious!

By the time she woke up, she found herself at home...

These people had taken over her home! They even locked her up in a room!

Her phone was found and taken away; even the room's window and door were locked!

Takeuchi Mikiko was very scared! Her fear had simply reached the extreme limits of fear!

She was still young and has countless beautiful fantasies about the future.

She has a mother and big sister who loved her dearly. In school, she had yet to confess to a very handsome senior whom she secretly liked.

She was fearful that these people would harm her... kill her, or perhaps even... violate her.

Although this beautiful big sister with long black hair had treated her quite kindly... there were a few young males within their group!

Even though Takeuchi Mikiko was still very young, she was clear that she possessed a lovable appearance, enough for her to be considered a very beautiful girl. Normally, when she was in school, some boys would

throw furtive glances at her

Occasionally, when she was working, some strange uncles would secretly say some unreasonable things to her.

Some would simply give her money as they tried to get her into compensated dating! [2]

Takeuchi Mikiko would firmly reject their approach each time. There was once where the convenience store owner had to use a broom to get rid of those bad people.

She was very clear that her appearance was capable of attracting men... however, there was already someone that she liked. The one she liked was the tall and handsome senior who looked like Takizawa Hideaki [3] when he smiled. Takeuchi Mikiko had already made up her mind to confess to him during his birthday next week...

Wu wu wu... now that she had encountered this group of kidnappers, she was uncertain if she could survive until next week!

Once she thought about all those, Takeuchi Mikiko suddenly lost her appetite towards the bowl of instant noodles that she was eyeing. She then broke down into tears again.

Qiao Qiao looked on helplessly at this girl who was crying while hugging her knees.

Nature wise, Big Miss Qiao was not a very friendly girl. She possessed a lofty character, just like that of a rose, beautiful to the eyes, yet possessing of thorns!

She was not good at comforting others, especially when the people in question happened to be strangers.

Watching Takeuchi Mikiko crying sorrowfully, Qiao Qiao bit her lips. "We really wouldn't hurt you! At the latest, we will be leaving tomorrow... aiya, can you please stop crying?"

It was at that moment that Chen Xiaolian entered the room.

He walked to Qiao Qiao's side and patted her shoulder. Then, he turned

to look at Takeuchi Mikiko. “What happened?”

“... she must be frightened. She keeps thinking that we will harm her. No matter how I try to advise her, it just won't work,” Qiao Qiao smiled bitterly.

“I will talk to her.”

Chen Xiaolian sat down cross-legged before abruptly slapping the floor heavily!

PA!

The resulting sound caused Takeuchi Mikiko to startle. She raised her head and regarded Chen Xiaolian fearfully.

She had since realized that this young man before her was this group's leader.

En, to be more accurate, this person before her cannot be considered a man. At best, he was only a big boy.

He has such a young appearance. Judging from his face, he should be around the same age as me.

He has such a clear and elegant face, so much so that he looks a bit like a girl. There is no evil and ferocious look, which kidnappers should have on his face.

“Little girl, you better listen!”

Chen Xiaolian deliberately made a grim face as he extended two fingers to pinch Takeuchi Mikiko's chin.

—

1 Yen (¥), the currency of Japan. 1 USD is worth around 100 ¥ as at July, 2016.

2 Compensated dating is the act of giving money or luxury gifts to attractive girls or older for their companionship or even possibly sexual favours, done by older men. In Japan, the term for this practice is ‘enjo-kosai’, sometimes shortened to ‘enکو’.

3 Takizawa Hideaki, a Japanese actor and singer.

Chapter 123: Exemption Card – Attacked!

The terrified Takeuchi Mikiko looked at Chen Xiaolian with widened eyes.

“Do not cry!” Chen Xiaolian uttered viciously.

Takeuchi Mikiko sniffled, but she dared not let out sobbing sounds anymore.

“We are bandits, robbers!” Chen Xiaolian said coldly. “But we do not kill for no reason. Also... I have no interest in violating girls. So, you better listen up. We only require a quiet place to stay for the night. We just do not want to be disturbed! That is all!

“By this time tomorrow, we will leave. After that... you will not have even the chance to encounter us again for the rest of your life. Understood?

“As for killing or harming you – I have no interest in those!

“However, if you are willing to cooperate, you can help out with some stuff and I will compensate you with some rewards.”

Takeuchi Mikiko instantly panicked and she shrank backwards. She struggled to free her chin, which Chen Xiaolian was gripping and then covered the collar area of her body. “No! I do not do compensated dating! No!”

Chen Xiaolian could not even laugh at her remark.

“Bastard! Who... who wants you to do that?” He suddenly pulled Qiao Qiao over. “Just look! This is my girlfriend! She is a hundred times more beautiful compared to you! I would never have any interest in an ugly chick like you!”

Takeuchi Mikiko was one who prioritized life before all else. Despite being labelled as an ugly chick, she did not feel angry at all! Rather, she was filled with a feeling that one would have after having survived through a calamity. She regarded Chen Xiaolian. “Real... really?”

“Of course!” Chen Xiaolian raised his chin. “You are too ugly! You are a hundred times worse compared to my girlfriend!”

“... I...” Takeuchi Mikiko stopped crying. “In that case, what is it that you want me to do?”

“Cook, do you know how to? I have checked the refrigerator. There are vegetables and meat there. There is still rice in the rice bags within the kitchen – can you cook?”

“Yes! Yes! I can!” Takeuchi Mikiko nodded her head repeatedly.

“Good! I do not like useless people. If you do not know how to do anything, then I will have to just tie you up and lock you up in this room. If you can work, then not only will I not harm you, I will even give you rewards.”

As he spoke, he pulled out a stack of US dollar bills – naturally, these were taken from Roddy.

“See this?” Chen Xiaolian purposely tossed those stack of bills on the ground. “As long as you are obedient and cook for us without causing troubles, when we leave tomorrow, this money will be yours!”

“Seriously?” Takeuchi Mikiko was shell-shocked. Subsequently, this girl’s eyes became excited!

The US dollar bills that littered the floor appeared to be at least around two thousand in value!

For someone who was not born in a wealthy family, this was certainly a huge amount of money for a Japanese high school student who was born into an ordinary family!

Because her father had died early, her mother and big sister had to work very hard. Most of their income was used to pay back the loan that her father had taken before he died. In order to avoid their home being taken by the bank, everyone in the family had to go through hard times. Takeuchi Mikiko herself was barely able to get any living expenses from her mother.

The reason she worked at the gas station's convenience store was also in order to earn money. That way, she would be able to give a decent present to the senior that she liked during his birthday next week. Then, a formal confession...

If she has two thousand US dollars...

Even if they were staying in the most expensive area in Tokyo, this would be enough to cover this month's living expenses for everyone in her family!

Takeuchi Mikiko immediately stopped crying, her eyes staring intently at the pile of US dollars on the floor. "You... are you telling the truth? These money... will you really give it to me?"

"Of course I will," Chen Xiaolian patted Qiao Qiao and pulled her up. Then, he looked down at Takeuchi Mikiko. "Now, wipe away your tears, get to the kitchen and start cooking! Remember, we like to eat meat and our appetite is big. So, cook more! You had better be wise and not cause trouble for yourself. Don't think of ways to run away or report to the police, understand?"

"... I understand! I will work hard!" Takeuchi Mikiko quickly scrambled up from the floor. She gazed at the bowl of instant noodles and swallowed her saliva. "Can I bring it to the kitchen and eat? I will eat it up quickly. It will not delay my work!"

"Go!" Chen Xiaolian waved his hand.

Observing the Japanese girl run out of the room while carrying the bowl of instant noodles like a rabbit, Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the US dollar bills on the floor – she was clever, not picking up the money instantly and instead going to work first.

"You sure can play the bad guy."

"There is no way around it. This girl obviously views us as bad guys. At a time like this, trying to be good guys would be pointless. We might as well pretend to be bad guys and set the conditions down clearly. That way, she could feel at ease," Chen Xiaolian shrugged.

“Did you enjoy pinching her chin earlier?” Qiao Qiao who was standing beside narrowed her eyes and turned to look at him. “Isn’t an under aged girl’s skin delicate? Hmph! You are definitely a lolicon!”

“ ... Hey! I am really not a lolicon!” Chen Xiaolian laughed out bitterly.

...

Takeuchi Mikiko was very dexterous in her work.

While she was busy working in the kitchen, she did not try to run away or get help from the outside.

Once while she was working, she carried a trash bag and subconsciously carried it all the way to the door. As she was about to move out to throw the trash bag, she suddenly recalled her situation. Turning to look at Chen Xiaolian and his group who were watching television in the living room, she saw Chen Xiaolian smile and wave his hand at her. Takeuchi Mikiko fearfully tossed the trash bag out into the trashcan placed outside before quickly closing the door as she headed in. She quickly raised both hands and said loudly. “I didn’t do anything!”

“Hurry up and go cook! We are starving to death here!” Chen Xiaolian shouted out violently.

Seeing the girl run into the kitchen, Lun Tai could not help himself and he laughed out. “In the future, it would be better to leave this matter of pretending to be bad guys to me and Bei Tai. Your face is too tender and not convincing enough. This girl is just too naïve, that the only reason why she could be tricked by you.”

“Right, where is that woman?” Qiao Qiao frowned.

“In the room, she did not come out,” Lun Tai said softly. “Although we are temporary allies, Xiaolian had put out an extra condition for her. We gave her a test... we will only allow her to join our guild in the last 10 minutes before the countdown ends.”

“Truly vicious,” Qiao Qiao smiled. “The last 10 minutes... wouldn’t that be risky for her? If we go back on our words in the end, she would only have 10 minutes of time. Even if she wants to rush out to finish the quest,

she would not have the time to do so.”

“This is a test. If she accepts this test, then that would prove that she trusts us. Otherwise... she can just leave right now!” Chen Xiaolian watched the TV with an unperturbed expression. “We are not related. For an outsider to join, they will have to pass a test. This is a cruel game after all.”

Lun Tai breathed out a sigh. “You are becoming more like a Guild Leader.”

“Right, there is good news that I want to tell you all,” Chen Xiaolian turned to look at those within the living room. All members were inside the living room and no one was sent to guard over Nicole – there was no such need anyways. If she wished to leave, she may do so at any time.

“What good news?”

“According to the system, we are the first to complete the first phase of the quest. Thus, we will receive a reward,” Chen Xiaolian gave a light smile.

The eyes of several of them flickered!

“What reward?” Xia Xiaolei moved close. “Big Brother Xiaolian, did the system gift points?”

“Not points,” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “However, I feel that it is more practical than points!”

He gave a faint smile and pulled something out from the system’s Item Box.

It was a gold coloured card, about the size of a normal credit card and felt light and thin in his palms.

There was a small line of text on the surface of the card.

Lun Tai gave it a glance and his face abruptly revealed surprise!

“Attack Exemption Card!”

Chen Xiaolian continued smiling softly. “That is right! This is a [B]

Class – Attack Exemption Card, a special system equipment that cannot be traded away. When used, we will not be automatically attacked by any system monsters within 30 minutes... naturally, it is of no effect against bosses.”

Xia Xiaolei and Roddy were incredibly excited. Roddy exclaimed in surprise. “So powerful? Doesn’t that mean we will be invincible for 30 minutes? When we meet a monster and use this card, won’t we be able to hit the monster without it hitting back?”

“It is not that simple!” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “Take note of the words ‘automatically attack’! In other words, the monsters will not automatically attack us. However, if we attack them, they will still counter attack.”

“That is still pretty good,” The veteran Lun Tai was content. “This is the equivalent of a safety zone that has a duration limit of 30 minutes! It is just like the Water De room of the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang. It could be used as a life-saving measure during critical moments!”

“It is even better than the Water De room,” Chen Xiaolian said seriously. “Although the Water De room is a safety zone, it could not be moved. This card on the other hand, could. When we encounter a crisis, we can use this card and run! 30 minutes of safety as escape time can truly save lives during critical junctures!”

All the guild members within the room smiled.

At that moment, however... a bang sounded out from outside the door!

It was followed by the sounds of explosions. Checking through the windows, they saw a mass of flames bursting out from outside the house!

At that same time, they heard Takeuchi Mikiko’s shrill scream of panic coming out of the kitchen!

At the same time again, the window of the living room was shattered apart and a black flaming object was tossed in through the broken window from the outside.

Instantly, the living room was set ablaze with flames and thick black

smoke billowed within!

...

“Molotov cocktail!”

Lun Tai howled out as jumped up while flipping the table, setting it before their team as an obstruction! Next, they converged behind the table.

After dragging Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo to the back of the table, he rushed out! Rushing towards the kitchen door, he kicked the door open to see flames licking the ceiling inside. However, Chen Xiaolian charged into the flames!

A few seconds later, Chen Xiaolian dragged Takeuchi Mikiko out and shouted. “Catch!”

After throwing her towards the backside of the table, he quickly shouted. “Lun Tai, Bei Tai! Follow me and charge out!”

Chapter 124: Getting Nearer!

Presently, the skies have turned dark.

Tens of motorbikes were gathered outside the house and the biker gang members held onto Molotov cocktails, steel baseball bats and many other weapons. They even lit fire to the middle of the street.

These fellows were dressed in peculiar fashion as they cackled loudly. The chaos engulfing Tokyo had catalysed out the most despicable and maddeningly violent nature within these fellows.

Several of those biker gang members raised the Molotov cocktails made from beer bottles and tossed them towards this house before them.

They had procured two barrels of gasoline from a gas station. At the back, several fellows with ring piercings were laughing as they used plastic pipes to fill the beer bottles with gas. Next, they plugged the opening with a piece of cotton cloth before lighting the tip of the cotton cloth with a lighter...

“Throw it! Throw it all at them!” A man with a little moustache and a bandage over his nose shouted angrily. He stood atop the motorbike, brandishing a metal pipe and howled furiously. “Burn those bastards to their deaths!”

The beating he received in the afternoon was a great insult to him.

Thus, he later gathered up a group of companions who went around finding the whereabouts of those strangers – this residential area was not that big. Additionally, many of these biker gang members were local bullies. In merely one afternoon’s time, they were able to find something: Someone had witnessed those strangers bringing the girl, Takeuchi Mikiko together with them!

With this thread, searching for them was not difficult.

The man with little moustache gathered up twenty companions in the afternoon and plundered a gas station, taking two barrels of gas with them – as for order, law and police... Tokyo had been rendered a mess and

the police simply could not spare anyone over, losing their power of deterrence.

Several large supermarkets located at the edge of the city have been robbed, but no police action could be seen. The police instead, only deployed their forces within certain key areas, concentrating their forces on the government buildings and key locations.

As for this civilian district, who the Hell would care about it?

The ordinary police officers in the residential district did not have any firearms and their numbers were limited. They have long since lost any ability to deter these mobsters.

Watching the door of the house burning up, the man with the little moustache felt his blood boiling up to his blood. He stood upon his motorbike and shouted out like a wild beast!

The current him was filled with a distorted feeling of joy. He felt that he had become the ruler of this area! Just look at the surrounding residences, they all had their doors locked tight and none dared to emerge. Even when he was going around robbing and vandalizing, no one had dared to resist him...

Normally, someone like him would only be considered a loser, a trash of society. But now, this loser of society had suddenly found his personal paradise.

The man with the little moustache only has one thought running through his mind now, to find those strangers who had beaten him up in the afternoon, and burn them to death! Next... he must also sample the taste of Takeuchi Mikiko!

With regards to order... and whether he will receive any punishments in the future... who cares! This scum's brain was in the grip of heated fever and could no longer consider those matters.

The Molotov cocktail smashed into the room. The scattered gasoline burned with intensity and even the walls were on fire. Some of the gasoline even spread out to the surrounding residential areas.

The man with the little moustache shouted and jumped off his motorbike. He took hold of a Molotov cocktail and sprinted forward, charging out of his group and towards the entrance of the residence before viciously hurling the cocktail forward!

This 'heroic' act of his aroused a series of applause from his companions. Several of them who were obviously female ruffians, shouted out in excitement.

"Kawashimoto Jun! Tomorrow, let's go to my school together! I have always wanted to teach some of those useless teachers a lesson!" A female ruffian screamed out.

The man with the little moustache laughed out and he turned around to say something...

Suddenly, the door opened!

The door flew out with a bang! The man with the little moustache did not even have the time to turn around before the door, which was roaring through the air slammed his body and flattened him to the ground.

Chen Xiaolian was the first to charge out. His face was extremely distorted!

He had taken many things into consideration, having considered how to avoid the other Players and Awakened ones and also the search efforts by the Tokyo police... unexpectedly, this group of trash would bring trouble to his doorstep.

If this huge evening incident ended up attracting the Tokyo police, then his plan of quietly hiding here for the last ten plus hours of the first phase to pass would be in vain. It might even end up attracting the attention and greed of other Players and Awakened ones.

Chen Xiaolian was furious. As he charged out the door, his body flew out in a jump that spanned several metres before landing on the ground.

Coincidentally, his landing spot was directly on top of the door that he had kicked out! The man with the little moustache who was pinned below the door was crushed and he cried out miserably, blood spraying out from

his mouth. Chen Xiaolian ignored him. He picked up the metal pipe that the man with the little moustache dropped and rushed into the crowd of biker gang members.

Facing two fellows holding onto Molotov cocktails, Chen Xiaolian did not give them any chance to throw those cocktails and struck them each on their heads. Those two screamed wretchedly, falling onto the ground as they clutched their heads. Chen Xiaolian grabbed hold of the Molotov cocktails and tossed them into the crowd of people... whether this action would lead to people being burned was not something he cared about right now. To him, these trashes deserved no sympathy.

The flames spread out and the crowd dispersed out in panic. Chen Xiaolian launched himself forward and sent a fellow guarding the barrel of gas flying with a kick.

“Kill him quick!” Some of the biker gang members shouted loudly as they rushed him while brandishing sticks, knives and an assortment of other weapons.

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian was not afraid of these weapons. He charged them with the metal pipe and had them sprawling on the ground in the blink of an eye.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai simply took out their guns with them as they emerged. Holding an M16 in his hands, the first thing Bei Tai did was to release a burst of bullets into the skies, instilling fear into the hearts of those biker gang members, causing them to shriek out. After seeing the machine gun, some of them quickly turned tail and ran. Some others jumped onto their motorbikes, starting them up as they prepared to escape.

Guns! This was something that the biker gang members were afraid of.

Japan was a society that banned guns. Even those big organizations would usually only use cold weapons. As such, firearms were rarely seen.

Some sober-headed ones had already realized that they have provoked a big trouble.

However, the veteran Bei Tai was far more cold-hearted compared to Chen Xiaolian!

Seeing that some were trying to escape using motorbikes, Bei Tai did not hesitate to unleash a burst of bullets at them!

Two to three motorbikes sped forward a distance of less than 10 metres before Bei Tai's bullets struck them. Those motorbikes released a sharp, chafing sound and skidded sideways as they fell. The bullets also struck some of the biker gang members who were riding on the bikes. Their bodies were coated with blood as they fell and the ground was turned into a pool of blood.

Lun Tai on the other hand, held onto a military knife in his hand and he stormed into the crowd. It did not matter who encountered him, this merciless fellow would directly present them with a stab!

The military knife with blood grooves stabbed into their bodies as Lun Tai ignored how much pain these fellows were in for.

In but moments, less than half of the biker gang remained.

Chen Xiaolian saw some running in two different directions through the street and he quickly shouted out. "Don't let them get away! Lun Tai!"

Lun Tai sneered. "Can I kill them?"

"... up to you!" Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. At this moment, he could no longer care about kindness and sympathy! Even if they did kill them, these trashes were undeserving of pity. Besides... they would still be refreshed later on.

Chen Xiaolian placed aside the concerns within his heart.

Lun Tai smirked and immediately produced a 97 rifle. He then moved into a standard kneeling posture before shooting down the few biker gang members running towards the left side.

In less than two minutes, Chen Xiaolian and the two brothers were the only ones left standing upon the street.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the biker gang members rolling on the floor,

his face distorted. He then walked over to inspect the barrels of gasoline before quickly saying. "We can't stay here any longer."

"Agreed!"

Lun Tai supplemented. "Such a big incident would probably attract the police officers. It would be best for us to not waste any strength dealing with the police."

Bei Tai on the other hand, laughed. "These fellows have a lot of motorbikes. We have a means of transportation right here."

"Then, let's head out!" Chen Xiaolian coldly said. "Immediately! Also, bring the barrels of gasoline as well. It can be used!"

They called out everyone who was inside the room. Qiao Qiao held onto the girl, Takeuchi Mikiko whom had fainted. It was unknown whether her state of unconsciousness was induced by fear or injury caused by the explosion.

"We cannot leave her here. Now that there is no more order, leaving a comatose, beautiful young girl out in the open would only bring a miserable fate upon her," Despite her cold exterior, she was also a woman. Thus, she had spoken out on behalf of Takeuchi Mikiko.

"Then, bring her along for now. When she wakes up, we'll leave her," Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Riding the motorbikes was not a difficult matter considering the high number of motorbikes left by the biker gang members. Chen Xiaolian brought Soo Soo with him as he got up a motorbike, Qiao Qiao with the Japanese girl, Roddy with Xia Xiaolei while the rest, Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Nicole got on one each.

Their group quickly started the motorbikes and left. As they were moving past a street, they heard the sound of sirens coming from the district area behind them.

As expected, despite having lost control of the situation, the police would still squeeze out some men to deal with this chaotic situation within a residential district.

Chen Xiaolian's group rushed out of the area, quickly leaving this residential district.

..

"Target has been located. Coordinates sent... target's distance from you is very small! Follow your current direction and you will make contact in approximately two minutes!"

The inspector listened to Falcon speak through the headset and replied indifferently. "Good. You have completed your task. Now, return to the safe house and watch the show!"

After saying that, this savage looking bald man pulled off the headset and stepped heavily onto the throttle, driving the car through the street. A car that was parked in front was smashed aside as his car roared through the street.

He adjusted the volume of the car's speakers to the max and a loud, heavy metal music rang out, causing him to furrow his brows. He randomly changed the song and a majestic symphony played out.

"Valkyrie? Haha! I love this song!"

Chapter 125: Fierce Battle!

Six motorbikes rushed through a street with Chen Xiaolian leading in the vanguard position. As they were passing through an intersection, Chen Xiaolian noticed through the corner of his eyes a Toyota SUV charging forward at full speed. He only had enough time to get a glimpse before they went past the intersection, but a thought flashed through his mind.

It's so late right now, why would any Japanese drive around in the streets? Moreover, their driving speed is so fast...

After those thoughts flitted through his mind, he realized that something was not right. As he was turning his head to shout out something...

He heard a crash from behind!

The Toyota SUV charged straight towards them from the intersection and one of their team's motorbikes was sent flying due to a collision with the vehicle! The motorbike skidded through the ground, releasing a sharp scraping sound while the rider rolled out. Chen Xiaolian immediately recognized the person to be Bei Tai!

After a sharp braking sound, Lun Tai jumped out from his motorbike and rolled on the ground before getting up and rushing towards his little brother!

At that moment, the Toyota SUV had already slammed into the wall beside the street. The hood of the vehicle was thrown up and thick billowing smoke was released.

A powerful force knocked the door off and it was sent flying! Next, a bald, robust man leapt out of the vehicle.

In his hands was a...

"Bloody Hell! Gatling!"

Roddy exclaimed in shock.

Tat tat tat tat tat...

A clear sound rang out in succession within the street!

The barrage of bullets was aimed at their flock of motorbikes. Their team spread out in panic while Bei Tai's motorbike had its fuel tank hit by the bullets, resulting in a loud explosion. The blazing flames of the explosion soared up to a height of 5 to 6 metres! After that, an orange coloured flame spread out in all directions!

"Hurry up and spread out!"

Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly after stopping the motorbike. Letting the bike fall, he pulled Soo Soo to the side of the street.

The gatling gun rotated as it madly shot out, spraying its bullets through the entire street!

Lun Tai had already hauled up Bei Tai and they were hiding behind a car.

Qiao Qiao and the rest had also discarded their motorbikes. Roddy and Xia Xiaolei were both the most fortunate and unfortunate. They were thrown off the motorbike that they were riding on and rolled through the ground into the bottom area of a car parked beside the road.

Qiao Qiao held onto the Japanese girl and they rushed into a shop beside the street, breaking into it by smashing through the shop's window.

"Who is that man?" Chen Xiaolian roared out in rage.

The bald man seemed uninterested in using the gatling gun to injure others – instead, he appeared to be someone who was playing a game. He revelled in unleashing the bullets. When the long linked ammunition was exhausted, he revealed a savage smile. He tossed the gatling gun onto the ground and stood in the middle of the road. With a cold voice, he shouted:

"That was just my greetings to you all! Now, let the games begin!"

After saying that, his robust and Herculean body swayed a little, leaving an after image as he charged forward. His target was obvious as he

charged towards the backside of a car parked by the left side of the intersection.

That was where Lun Tai and Bei Tai were hiding!

Lun Tai reacted quickly, raising his 97 assault rifle and shot out without stopping. However, the bald man's figure moved at an incredible speed, moving through the trajectories of the incoming bullets! In just a few blinks, he had reached the side of the car!

Then, he abruptly moved his leg and sent a kick at the car!

Bang!

A loud sound rang out and the car that Lun Tai and Bei Tai were using as cover was sent flying! The car spun around a few times in the air as it flew over Lun Tai's head and smashed into a shop beside the street!

Before Lun Tai could react to that, the bald man had already lunged forward!

The bald man's left hand quickly gripped the rifle's muzzle and gave it a gentle twist, twisting the rifle muzzle and breaking the rifle apart!

Lun Tai glared at him and sent his clenched fist towards the bald man. The bald man however, only used his right hand to swat away Lun Tai's incoming fist. After that, he gripped Lun Tai's neck and held him up high!

Lun Tai howled and used both his arms and legs to punch and kick the bald man. However, despite his stout figure, he was no different from an infant before this bear like Herculean bald man!

The bald man curled the corners of his lips and grinned. With his hand still holding on to Lun Tai, he suddenly leapt towards the air, heading towards a wall.

BANG!

Lun Tai who was held by him was brutally smashed into the walls! The walls broke apart as a result and Lun Tai who was still in the grip of the bald man was slammed down onto the ground!

In just one moment! Lun Tai's body, chest and back were suffering from

multiple fractures and blood sprayed out from both his mouth and nose. Lun Tai himself was gasping desperately for breath.

By then, the bald man had already let loose his grip on Lun Tai. “Too weak. You are not the Floating Angel... who is it?”

The bald man turned around. There, Bei Tai who had been left sprawling on the ground had already, with great effort, propped himself up. Back then, the motorbike that he was riding on was directly slammed and he was sent flying, causing him to suffer from severe injuries. Just then, he had witnessed his elder brother beaten to the brink of death and he roared out. He raised his M16 at the bald man and pulled the trigger.

The bald man sneered and ignored the incoming bullets, striding towards Bei Tai!

Pu pu pu...

The bullets struck the bald man's body, only to issue out a cotton like sound.

The bald man walked until he was before Bei Tai and sneered. He abruptly extended his hands to grab the collar of his own clothes...

A “chi” sound was heard.

He tore out the garment that he was wearing!

His upper body was laid bare, revealing rock like muscles upon his body! His naked upper body resembled those from the legendary War God from Greek!

His chest muscles had stopped the bullets and he simply squeezed them out, not a single wound left on his skin!

“It doesn't seem to be you as well... too weak.”

The bald man delivered a kick onto Bei Tai's chest, causing Bei Tai to cry out wretchedly. His sternum was fractured by the kick and his body flew across the street to smash into a fire hydrant by the street. With a bang, the fire hydrant broke and water gushed out like a water dragon charging into the sky!

“Who is the Floating Angel? Show yourself!”

...

Everything happened too fast!

It was such that Chen Xiaolian and the other team members were unable to react at all. Their two strongest powerhouses, the veterans Lun Tai and Bei Tai had already been taken out!

Chen Xiaolian rushed forward, summoning out the Bone Crusher Axe in his hand. Charging through the street, he sent out the axe!

Head Cleaver!

Impish Teeth Displacer!

Ear Gouger!

The bald man sneered as he watched Chen Xiaolian rushing over. He stood still, observed Chen Xiaolian's incoming axe, and casually raised his right hand.

Dang!

Dang!

Dang!

Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes were all blocked by the bald man using his one hand.

The sharp axe hacking down on his arm gave the feeling that it was instead hacking down on metal! An intense shock ran through the axe, causing Chen Xiaolian's palm to go numb and he was unable to hold on the Bone Crusher Axe!

The bald man punched out onto the handle of the axe. Chen Xiaolian instantly spat out a mouthful of blood and his body was knocked backwards!

What a formidable strength!

Even though my own strength is at [B] Class!

Qiao Qiao and Roddy too, rushed forward!

Roddy wielded the [B] Class katana in his hand and hacked down onto the bald man's head!

Dang!

This attack struck the bald man's head! However, the sharp katana's attack only produced a few sparks of light.

The bald man turned his head, grinned at Roddy and suddenly caught hold of the katana's blade. Then, he sent Roddy hurtling with a kick.

The [B] Class katana in his hand was twisted into a deformed mess!

Seeing Roddy spray out blood as he was sent flying, the bald man smiled contemptuously. "Another one ruled out."

As he said that, Qiao Qiao's kick flew towards the bald man's head. However, the kick of hers with all her might behind it resulted in her feeling as though she had just kicked a wall. The resulting shock from the impact sent her falling backwards instead!

"Hmph... too weak as well. It seems like you are not the one either!" The bald man turned around, glanced at Qiao Qiao, and smiled derisively. He walked over and grabbed Qiao Qiao's leg, and then he lifted her up. "A pity, I do not kill women."

He then tossed Qiao Qiao to the side of the street where she ended up slamming into a streetlamp. Qiao Qiao fell to the ground and spewed out blood.

"Qiao Qiao! Roddy!"

Chen Xiaolian howled loudly and summoned out Garfield!

After appearing, the Four-Eyed War Cat roared and split into three doppelgangers! All three rushed the bald man.

The Four-Eyed War Cat possessed an [A-] Physique, giving it a huge surge in strength. It unleashed its Tiger Rush and was able to knock the bald man down to the ground! Man and cat tangled together, but Garfield was instantly tossed away by the bald man. He then jumped up and

connected a fist with the body of another doppelganger. The doppelganger emitted a faint growl and was knocked away. The third doppelganger had its mouth wide open, directing it at the bald man before letting out a roar.

Cat's Roar!

A transparent shockwave burst out in the direction of the bald man, but he only sneered. He crossed both arms before his body and the shockwave struck his body squarely. The bald man retreated two steps back before easing both his arms. "Four-Eyed War Cat? I didn't think that someone would use this pet. Doppelganger? What kind of skill is this?"

He stormed forward and sent the doppelganger that had issued out the Cat's Roar flying with a kick.

Behind him, another doppelganger had leapt onto the bald man's back...

One man versus three cats; they fought as they rolled on the ground.

Garfield was able to split into three doppelgangers. However, despite their ferocity, Garfield's doppelgangers were unable to get much damage done to the bald man. Once again, two of the doppelgangers, which were clinging onto both the bald man's front and back, were tossed away...

Chen Xiaolian had already produced the Tiger Tally in his hand. He gripped it tightly and was about to summon out Bai Qi...

It was at that moment that a voice rang out from within the shadows!

"Everyone, get down!"

Chen Xiaolian recognized the voice... it was Nicole!

Back when they were attacked, Nicole had seemingly hidden herself at an unknown location!

After hearing her words, Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate to throw himself onto the ground. Subsequently, he heard a loud explosion going off!

BOOM!

The ground itself appeared to be shaking!

Chen Xiaolian watched as a translucent shockwave spread out, resembling a slash! There was a distance of roughly 1 metre between the shockwave and the ground. The bald man stood before the shockwave and it swept past his waist area! It threw his entire body back and he fell heavily on his butt and onto the ground!

At the same time, the shockwave caused a three-storey residential building beside the street to fall over! The building tilted over and collapsed, falling down on the bald man! In an instant, he was buried by the collapsing building!

Nicole walked out of the shadows, her face pale. She went over and helped prop Chen Xiaolian up.

“You... where did you run off to just now?”

“I went to set up the Shockwave Bomb,” Nicole forced out a smile. “I only have one. Now, its spent. Directing the explosion required time. That was why I did not fight earlier. Besides, I do not have the strength to fight right now.”

“He... is he dead?” Chen Xiaolian peered at the debris of the three-storey building, which had fallen over the middle of the street.

“No! We need to hurry up and leave!” Nicole’s expression was grim. “I know this fellow! You guys are no match for him! Me... neither!”

“Let’s take this opportunity to kill him!” Chen Xiaolian struggled to get up, but had his clothes grabbed by Nicole. “Listen to me! Take this opportunity to run as fast as possible! We cannot kill him! Trust me! Don’t take this risk! All we need to do is wait out for the first phase of the quest to end!”

Chen Xiaolian had wanted to interject that he still had a killer move in hand. However, Nicole’s final words made him give up on this risky move.

The strength displayed by this bald man was indeed terrifying! An overwhelming amount of strength! Although they do not know the specifics of his attribute values, his aura caused Chen Xiaolian to tremor.

This feeling was nearly comparable to Bai Qi from the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang!

Before him, the veteran Lun Tai could not even last a moment!

“Hurry! Hurry up and leave!”

Nicole had already started up an abandoned Mitsubishi pickup truck and moved towards Lun Tai and Bei Tai. She held them both, one with each hand and placed them both on the truck. Then, she gave them both a Healing Beast Blood.

Chen Xiaolian, Qiao Qiao, Roddy and the others also got onto the truck.

“Hurry! We only need to shake him off! Unless my strength is restored, we will not be able to fight him,” Nicole sat in the driver’s seat and started the vehicle. The vehicle’s engine roared out and they left the street.

...

At the street area where the three-storey building had collapsed upon, a few minute streams of liquid flowed out towards an open space and converged together.

It appeared to be streams of liquid metal... no, it would be inaccurate to label it as liquid metal, instead... it appeared to be a form of data stream!

The unexpected appearance of this stream of data in such a place was highly peculiar!

After converging together, it wiggled for a bit and quickly transformed into the shape of a human!

The bald man slowly emerged from it. He twisted his neck, releasing “ka ka” sounds.

“Shockwave Bomb? I finally caught you, poor little angel! To think that you would not dare to fight me head on and choose to run instead. It seems that you are injured... hahahaha.”

The bald man walked to the roadside and casually pulled out the doors of a car. He sat inside and started the car...

“How unfortunate, there is no music,” He slapped the car’s speakers. “It seems the owner of this car is a tasteless NPC.”

With a rumble, the car charged into the road, following the direction taken by Chen Xiaolian’s team.

“I need their coordinates, Falcon!”

The bald man pressed his ear lightly and a data stream instantly flowed out, transforming into a headset.

“The target is fleeing,” Falcon’s voice came over. “However... I need to remind you, Sir Inspector. There is less than 10 hours of time on the countdown for the first phase of the quest. It would be best for you to make use of this time for the first phase. Otherwise, once the countdown ends, those who fail to complete the first phase of the quest will be forcibly teleported out of this instance dungeon.”

“Oh?” The bald man abruptly stepped on the brakes, stopping the car in the middle of the road.

He rubbed his chin and pondered. “Only 10 hours left... such a short hunting duration is not entertaining at all! Since that is the case, I’ll temporarily change my plan.”

He formed a languid smile. “Falcon, find me the coordinates of several participants, I need some energy sources.”

“Yes, currently searching... there is one situated 2.1 km away from you... en, however, the opponents are probably Players and not Awakened ones.”

“Like Hell I care! I’ll kill them all!”

Chapter 126: Angel Killer

The pickup truck sped through the street in the night. After passing through two blocks, Chen Xiaolian saw that there was no sign of anyone chasing them. Only then was he able to relax a little. However, his knitted eyebrows grew tighter.

He had bought 2 Healing Type Beast Blood through Xia Xiaolei and gave one each to Qiao Qiao and Roddy. Seeing them in a stable condition while seated behind, he turned and directed his gaze towards Nicole in the driver's seat.

“We need to talk!”

“Go ahead, what is it?” Nicole's eyes stared at the road ahead, her expression dark.

“That fellow back then, who is he?”

Nicole did not say anything for a moment. Then, she replied with a low voice. “Thorned Flower Guild.”

The name was not unfamiliar to Chen Xiaolian, who also recalled the thorned flower pattern he saw on the wreckage of the Thunderstorm Tank.

“A very strong guild?”

“I fear the word ‘very strong’ alone is not enough to describe the Thorned Flower Guild,” Nicole revealed a bitter face. “Simply put, ‘Thorned Flower’ is one of Zero City's biggest enemies. They could even be considered as ‘Zero City's Public Enemy’. Several of the top guilds within Zero City and Zero City's own governing organization have always been in a war with this Thorned Flower Guild.”

Chen Xiaolian inhaled a mouthful of cold air.

He had seen Zero City before. For a small guild like his Meteor Rock Guild, Zero City was a titan like existence. However, this ‘Thorned Flower Guild’ could actually go toe to toe and become a public enemy for the top organizations within Zero City!

The word 'public enemy' was significant.

"That means Thorned Flower Guild is a Player Guild? They are the public enemy of all Awakened ones?"

After tabling this question, Chen Xiaolian was able to perceive that the corners of Nicole's lips had curled into a bitter smile.

Then, he saw Nicole's eyes. The bitter smile from earlier had faded away, to be replaced instead by traces of a profound pain!

"You are wrong. Thorned Flower Guild is not the 'Awakened ones' Public Enemy'. It is just 'Zero City's Public Enemy'."

"I do not understand."

Nicole suddenly turned around and stared deeply at Chen Xiaolian. "You do not understand? Then I will make it simple! The members of Thorned Flower Guild are not merely made up of Players!"

"What?" Chen Xiaolian was taken aback. "You mean..."

"Thorned Flower Guild have recruited no small number of Awakened ones, who contributed to the increase of Thorned Flower's strength! Or perhaps, we could say that these people chose to seek refuge in Thorned Flower Guild."

"But... but we are Awakened ones! Aren't Awakened ones naturally in opposition against Players?"

Both of Nicole's hands gripped the steering wheel tightly and she exhaled deeply before answering in a low tone. "This world is not simply black and white. In the eyes of the Players, we are all NPCs. To them, even the Awakened ones are simply NPCs with a much higher level of intelligence, ones that could give them a higher level of excitement and gaming experience.

"Since Players can kill NPCs and us... why not enslave, exploit and recruit?"

"Besides... not all Awakened ones would have the determination to fight against the Players. Some Awakened ones, for the sake of survival or a

better life, would naturally seek refuge by siding with Players.

“This is a very normal occurrence. Even in a war between nations, there will be capitulators and puppet armies.

“When your country was in a war with Japan decades ago, was there any fewer amounts of traitors and puppet armies?”

Chen Xiaolian’s mouth opened wide, speechless.

“Thorned Flower Guild is very powerful and the arrangement of their members is very complex. Naturally, their core circle is made up of Players. However, there are powerful and outstanding Awakened ones who will, due to Thorned Flower Guild’s enticements, threats or various other reasons, end up joining Thorned Flower Guild.

“Some do so for the sake of survival while some do so for the sake of power. At any rate, confronting Thorned Flower Guild has always been one of Zero City’s biggest headaches.”

“The bald man from earlier...”

“I know that fellow,” Nicole’s eyes twitched and she took a deep breath. “He... is very famous. He is an expert from Thorned Flower Guild.”

Next, Nicole suddenly said using a peculiar tone of voice. “I have told you before, I am part of the ‘Floating Angels’ organized by Zero City’s security personnel.

“As an organization established by the security personnel, part of the combat forces, we are always fighting on the front lines. In order to protect Zero City, we would engage in battle with various different enemies.

“Although the Floating Angels is a guild in name only, it also has its core members. The core powerhouses of the guild amount to a total of twelve.

“These twelve people are known as ‘True Angels’. They are the strongest twelve amongst the members of Floating Angels Guild. These Twelve Angels have always been part of the core forces in the defence of Zero

City.

“However, Floating Angels Guild is not invincible. Several Floating Angels have had to give their lives in the battles against Thorned Flower Guild. But most importantly, there was an incident where one of the ‘Twelve Angels’ was killed in battle!”

After she said that, Chen Xiaolian noted that Nicole’s eyes were reddening as she bit down hard on her lips.

Chen Xiaolian’s mind was also secretly embroiled by surging waves!

Floating Angels are incredibly strong as it is. For them to stand out and be listed as the twelve strongest ones, there can be no doubt about their strength.

For such a master to be killed in battle...

“The bald man from back then is a renowned expert from Thorned Flower Guild. He has a very special nickname... Angel Killer.”

Chen Xiaolian’s heart skipped a beat. “Angel Killer? Then... when you said that one of the Twelve Angels was killed in battle, could it be...”

“Killed by him!” Nicole’s face paled and her fingers had turned white. Under her ministrations, the steering wheel had deformed to the point of issuing “gazhi gazhi” sounds. She struggled laboriously to suppress her agitated feeling. “The one who was killed was given the codename ‘Guardian Angel’. He was an extremely outstanding soldier and a brilliant leader, well respected by all members of Floating Angels Guild. In a field mission three years ago, he led a team into an instance dungeon and ended up fighting an intense battle against Thorned Flower Guild. Finally...”

Nicole suddenly bit down hard on her lips and a teardrop tumbled out of the edge of her eye, rolling down her cheek.

Chen Xiaolian’s heart suddenly gave a throb. “Nicole, you...”

“The ‘Guardian Angel’ who was killed is my father, my biological father,” Nicole suddenly turned her head around and watched Chen

Xiaolian's expression of shock. "Are you very surprised? You did not expect a father daughter pair to exist within the circle of Awakened ones, did you?"

"... this is indeed very surprising," Chen Xiaolian replied in a low voice. "The creation of Awakened ones should have been random..."

"It happened by accident," Nicole nodded her head and quickly wiped away her tears. "That year, I was only 6 years old when I accompanied my father on a vacation trip. Then, we were sucked into an instance dungeon where both my father and me became Awakened ones! A father and daughter pair like ours is very rare in the world of Awakened ones.

"For us to be sucked into this cruel world, that was bad luck on our part. However... for us personally, it is a blessing. Because, I have a father who would always protect me while I was growing up. That was how someone like me, who became an Awakened at the age of six could survive until now.

"I am 21 years old this year. For the past tens of years, I have always been growing up under my father's wing. In Zero City, my father's comrade-in-arms would regard me as their own daughter and care for me. My father... he taught me everything... combat, tactics, training, piloting... almost every step I took was done in pursuit of my father's footsteps.

"We have fought side by side time and again as father took me with him through various life and death situations. I can't even remember the number of times my father had used his own shoulder support me, giving me hope towards life!

"Then, two years ago, after leaving for that field mission, my father never came back to Zero City. My father's team mates brought back my father's Floater. But, even the Floater had been wrecked to the brink of death!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly recalled something and he carefully spoke out. "After an Awakened dies, they would be refreshed into an ordinary person. Your father..."

"Of course he has also been refreshed."

After saying that, Nicole's voice took on a complicated tone. "After being refreshed back into the ordinary world, my father returned to his identity as an ordinary person and continued with his life using that identity as an ordinary person.

"However, the memories of those 16 years... those 16 years where we fought side by side through life and death... those 16 years where he taught me all those things bit by bit... all of them no longer exists.

"It no longer exists...

"He could not recall all those risky adventures that we had experienced together, the many times where we were faced with life and death situations, that we had once protected one other by using our own bodies to take the enemy fire! He could no longer remember those times when he taught me how to pilot Mechs or when he had personally imparted to me those various combat techniques.

"After being refreshed, my father is simply an accountant who sits in the garden to raise his flowers while waiting for retirement.

"As for me... the man who had accompanied me through the forest of guns and rain of bullets no longer exists. Those 16 years' worth of memories, that man who existed for 16 years is no more!

"The one who was refreshed out may only have the memories of me up until my 6-year-old self.

"Do you want to know the most ridiculous part in all this?"

"... .. what?"

"The system, it even programmed a set of memories for him! Filling up the gap within those 16 years! That's right! Isn't it ridiculous? From that time when I was a 6-year-old, up until I became 21, for the sake of preserving balance within the system, it programmed my father with a set of memories for those 16 years of time! In these memories, I became an estranged daughter with little to no contact with my family for the last 10 plus years, someone who would often be at work without returning home, a daughter who cared little about him!

“Occasionally, I would leave Zero City and return home to see him.

“But, I cannot bear it... my father who had once used his shoulders to prop me up to the skies, who used his own body to cover me from enemy fire... now looks at me with a cold and distant expression in his eyes.

“For me, my real father within my mind from those 16 years’ worth of memories... is dead!”

Chapter 127: Punishment

Chen Xiaolian was left speechless!

In the eyes of all Awakened ones, this topic was likely the most sensitive one to them.

The person that will be refreshed after death... would that person still be the same person?

Just like what had happened to Nicole. Her father was refreshed after his death. However, more than 10 years' worth of memories was reset... as such, would that person still be the same person?

The reason you are you is because of your memories, emotions, personality etc. ... all of them come together to form one whole identity. If all those were to be replaced...

Will you still be you?

Or... just a re-created identical replacement?

"When I was very young, I had this experience," Nicole spoke in a low tone. "When I was still young, my father had given me a doll as a present. I loved it to the extreme, and I would hold it regardless of eating time or sleeping time. Finally, one day, I dropped the doll and it became broken. I was devastated. So, my father bought a new doll that was identical for me. However... I did not like the new one."

The topic was too disheartening and the heaviness of the atmosphere caused everyone in the vehicle to fall silent.

After a while, Chen Xiaolian slowly asked. "Then... you must really hate that Angel Killer, right? Back then, why..."

"Why not take the opportunity to kill him?" Nicole laughed out bitterly as her face turned resentful. She took a deep breath and her eyes turned peculiar. "Because... I am unable to!"

Pausing, she then stared at Chen Xiaolian. "Did you think I never tried to? After my father was killed, his comrade-in-arms and the other

members of the Floating Angels had attempted to avenge my father. But every attempt ended in failure.

“I still remember, when father was killed in that instance dungeon, he entrusted his dying words for me to a Floating Angel who returned alive.”

The nasal sound within Nicole’s voice grew heavier. After sniffing lightly, she slowly said. “My father said he knows my personality enough to know that I would never give up on revenge. So, he will not dissuade me. He will simply tell me two things: First, there is only one life. As such, there will only be one opportunity for revenge! Second, until my strength has grown to the point where I can fight against that fellow, I should bear with it patiently until the day I have enough assurance.

“At first, I was very impulsive. Until one time, a good friend of my father, an expert who is also one of the Twelve Angels brought some men with him to participate in an instance dungeon and encountered the Angel Killer. That expert attempted to avenge my father and fought against the enemy. In the end... he returned suffering from serious injuries.

“From that day forth, I temporarily gave up on the notion of revenge.

“My father is right, I only have one chance. If I were to impulsively rush out and fail, I will die and there will be no more chances.

“Thus, I shall wait until the day I have enough strength and assurance, only then will I act! Otherwise, even if we came face to face, the first thing I will choose to do is run away! Even if you say I am cowardly, I do not care.”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. However, Roddy who was seated in the back row spoke out.

“This act of yours is not cowardly; this act is one that requires the greatest amount of courage!”

Nicole glanced at Roddy through the rear view mirror. “Thank you.”

“All right, let’s talk about that fellow, the Angel Killer,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “We aren’t out of the woods yet.”

Nicole nodded.

“A top expert from Thorned Flower, nicknamed ‘Angel Killer’. En, I know his name. In Thorned Flower Guild, he is called... Tian Lie.

“His skill is of the technological type... additionally, it appears that his ability allows him to exercise control over almost all technological objects!

“The Floating Angels hostile to him conducted a great deal of information gathering. At present, it appears that he possesses a special skill, giving him a near immortal body. This ability allows his body to transform into fine liquid metal, which could even transform into data! In other words, he can transform into a virtual stream of data that could act separately.

“His skill comes with two functions, Assimilation and Devour. In other words, killing him is extremely difficult.

“Even if you succeed in killing him, as long as a liquid metal cell escapes his body, the data stream hidden within that liquid metal would be able to flow into and blend with the surrounding metallic objects. It will devour and assimilate them... finally, it will perfectly resurrect him!

“Amongst all known abilities, this ability is the one closest to an ‘immortal body’!

“Naturally, it is not impossible to kill him. The biggest weakness of this ability is the specific dependence towards metallic materials.

“In order to utterly kill him, you must first bring him to an area without any metallic materials. Then, kill him and annihilate every last metal cell in his body so that the data stream has no way of escaping!”

Hearing this, the expression on Chen Xiaolian and the others in the vehicles twitched!

What a Heavenly defying skill!

An area without any metallic materials?

In this world, where could they find such a place?

Even in the wilderness of the mountains and forests, there would still be many metal elements hidden within the rocks!

In order to find a place devoid of any metal elements... unless they were to artificially create such a place.

To kill that fellow, how could they even do it...

“Naturally, if your strength is much higher than him, for example, if you attained [S] Class or higher... then you can use overwhelming strength to crush him and instant kill him. Then, use an ability of the control type to stop his metal cells from escaping. However, this is too difficult. Unless your ability is one class higher than his, you would be unable to accomplish it.

Nicole smiled grudgingly and continued. “That was why, back in the street earlier, I had advised you not to waste time against him. In the city, concrete steel is everywhere and there are too many metal objects in the surroundings. Considering that our strength is already below his, trying to kill him in that environment is simply impossible.”

Chen Xiaolian was silent... if that is the case, trying to kill that fellow known as Tian Lie... under the present circumstances; it is indeed an impossible task.

“We can only choose to flee,” Nicole shook her head. “According to our gathered information, this Tian Lie has a very high position within Thorned Flower Guild. He will not directly participate in an instance dungeon. Additionally, based on our earlier encounter with the Thorned Flower Guild team, I surmise that this has to do with the Thorned Flower Guild’s conventional conduct of allocating quests.

“The team would be responsible for participating in the instance dungeon while an expert like Tian Lie would act as someone known as ‘Inspector’ and enter the instance dungeon as an extra. He will then escort them or go about evaluating and supervising the performance of the team that was sent in.”

“Inspector? What does that mean? Could it be he does not have to participate in the instance dungeon? And yet he could still enter an

instance dungeon area at random? Is that not a huge BUG?” Roddy was shocked.

“No, it is not a BUG,” Nicole explained. “Theoretically speaking, Tian Lie should have entered as an instance dungeon participant. In other words, the instance dungeon will also issue the first phase of the quest to him. But, he will not care about it. He will only act as the supervisor and inspector for his side. After entering the instance dungeon, he will conduct supervision and control the overall situation of the team members from his side.

“This is the conventional procedure of Thorned Flower Guild. Normally, when they are sending in a rather new team or one that has weaker strength into an instance dungeon, the guild will also send an expert to escort and control the situation. The expert will not participate in the instance dungeon and will leave at a certain time.

“Using this deduction, that would mean the team we encountered earlier is a weaker team. That is why an expert like Tian Lie would be dispatched out to control the situation.

“Thorned Flower Guild has always placed importance in the nurturing of their own members. Thus, an expert will always be there to control the situation for them and monitor the weak teams. That way, they can ensure that the weak can have a period of growth.”

“But... if Tian Lie is only within the instance dungeon to sit by the sidelines and not complete the quest... would he not receive the system punishment for failing the quest?” Roddy asked.

“Punishment will certainly be received,” Nicole frowned. “But a top guild like Thorned Flower Guild will surely have their own special capabilities. Perhaps their guild has a special privilege that would allow them to avoid system punishment – that is our speculation. They might actually have this kind of privilege. As you all know, any system will have loopholes and bugs.

“Take Zero City for example. Those who hide in Zero City would be able to shield themselves from the system’s quest notifications. This is

also a special privilege, or perhaps a form of exploitable BUG.

“As for Thorned Flower Guild, we have always suspected that they too, possess such similar capabilities.

“Let us take a step back and assume that they do not...

“For an expert like Tian Lie, the system punishment is something that would not threaten him at all.”

“What kind of system punishment is there for those who failed the quest?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

“There are a lot,” Nicole knitted her eyebrows. “It is too hard to say as well. The system punishment is never fixed. It will depend on the instance dungeon’s class of difficulty and the participant or team’s class. Putting those into consideration, the system will automatically make an assessment.

“For example, a high class instance dungeon and a low class participant. Under such circumstances, the system will recognize that the probability of you completing the quest was very small to begin with. So, even if you fail, the punishment will not be too severe.

“If the instance dungeon has a low class difficulty and the participant is of a high class, the system will determine that the participant has a high chance of completing the quest... if the participant fails, the punishment would be very severe.

“All in all, it will depend on the comprehensive evaluation.

“Generally speaking, there are two types of punishment. The first is instant death!”

Hearing that, everyone within the vehicle turned silent. Chen Xiaolian turned around to look at Qiao Qiao, Roddy and Soo Soo.

“No need to panic. Instant death punishment is extremely rare within instance dungeons. If all the participants who fail to complete the quest were killed off, then there would not be many people left in this game.

“Most of the punishment would involve being forced to participate in a

‘punishment type instance dungeon’.

Punishment type instance dungeon?

Just listening to the name gave them a foreboding feeling...

...

“I can answer this question.”

Lun Tai who had been sitting behind the pickup opened his mouth.

After taking the Healing Beast Blood, he appeared to have been slightly rejuvenated.

The back window of the pickup truck had already been dismantled and Lun Tai moved close, speaking slowly. “There are many punishment type instance dungeons, from easy to difficult.

“Generally speaking, the system will allocate an area to become an instance dungeon area at a specific time and place, and then force those who received punishment for failing to participate in the instance dungeon.

“These types of instance dungeons generally do not have any main storyline quests.

“Most of them belong to the survival type of instance dungeon.

“In other words, it is possible for a hundred participants to be thrown in for a set period of time. Then, as long as they could survive until the end of the instance dungeon, they will make it.

“Of course, some instance dungeons are more outrageous than others and would encourage the participants to kill one another. For example, not only do the participants have to survive, the system will use rewards as a method to drive participants to hunt and kill others. Although most of these are not mandatory... if the system were to give out rewards, such as by killing a participant, you will gain a certain amount of points... by doing so, the structure of the instance dungeon will be utterly changed.

“At any rate, survival type instance dungeons are the most common form of system punishment.

“Some have a high rate of survival while others have such a low rate of survival, it is simply terrifying.

“Of course, the latter is part of the minority.”

...

Tian Lie: Raw: ‘天烈’, pinyin: ‘tiān liè’. Tian (天) means Heaven or sky, Lie (烈) means strong.

Chapter 128: Second Phase of the Quest

Chen Xiaolian was able to somewhat grasp what Nicole meant.

Punishment type instance dungeons... for the average Players and Awakened ones, it may prove dangerous.

However, in the eyes of an expert like Tian Lie... most of the punishment instance dungeons would not prove difficult for someone like him.

“Enough, let us stop talking about these distant matters. Let us first solve the problem before us.”

Chen Xiaolian checked the time. “We still have 10 more hours to go. According to our speculation, Tian Lie would probably leave this instance dungeon after the first phase’s countdown ends. That way, we would be rid of him.”

“So, we need to get by through these 10 hours,” Qiao Qiao wrinkled her brows. “But... how did he find us earlier?”

“Thorned Flower Guild has many methods. The most common method is to form a full tactical team. This team would have a member who specializes in providing support in terms of gathering intelligence. Usually, this person would be given the nickname ‘Falcon’.

“Doing this is not hard. All they need do is arrive at the instance dungeon area before the instance dungeon begins, prepare some technological equipment such as a full series of surveillance equipment and install them in various parts of Tokyo. That way, when the instance dungeon starts, most of the areas within Tokyo would be within their surveillance. They could notice even the most minute of changes.

“Of course, if we hide in a room, we won’t be found. However, if a battle occurs or if you engage in flying, you will be found.

“If I am not mistaken, our earlier entanglement with those biker gang must have been noticed by the monitoring team member from Thorned Flower Guild. That was how Tian Lie could find us.

“In other words, we are currently in danger!” Chen Xiaolian said

seriously. “We were engaged in a battle earlier before running away. Maybe, from the moment we started this vehicle, we have fallen under the enemy’s surveillance! If that is the case, Tian Lie might chase up to us...”

“There is that possibility,” Nicole said softly. “Being outdoor puts us at the greatest risk of being found. It would be best for us to hide underground. Many equipment are unable to monitor underground areas.”

“We need to find a blind spot in their surveillance network!” Chen Xiaolian turned to Nicole. “Do you have any ideas?”

Nicole smiled.

...

...

Nicole’s method was not a complicated one. First, they drove towards a chaos-filled place.

They stopped at a huge supermarket. Even now, there were still many mobsters taking advantage of this state of chaos to vandalize and loot the place. Still, the parking lot on the outside of the supermarket was littered with many cars.

Under the night sky, they saw that the gates to the supermarket were open and many people were moving back and forth, as they looted the place. They looted various household appliances, mobile devices, and others of the electronic type...

The police could no longer spare any men for this sort of incidents. Even the security personnel of the supermarket had long since run off.

Their team drove into the parking lot and discarded the pickup truck before changing to a minibus – Chen Xiaolian had stepped forward to snatch the minibus from several mobsters. Those fellows were beaten senseless and left lying by the road.

Driving the minibus, their team headed into an office building’s underground parking lot, located on the edge of the district.

This parking lot was located three levels below ground level. According to Nicole, the surveillance equipment utilized by Thorned Flower Guild were probably set up on the ground floor of each district. The main function of those devices was their capacity to observe and sense thermal fluctuations. Those same devices, however, were not very efficient at monitoring underground areas.

“This information is acquired from our countless experience of fighting against Thorned Flower Guild. Moreover... even if they want to hack into the city’s monitoring system, the city itself is currently in a state of chaos and most of the city area is suffering from network blackout. Thus, the city’s monitoring system has been partially crippled.

“This building I chose is located in the blackout zone where the surveillance cameras have failed. This place should be temporarily safe.”

“There is less than 9 hours,” Chen Xiaolian sighed. Next, he got everyone to rest in the vehicle and brought out the food and drinks, and distributed them.

One minor incident occurred in the middle of the night. The comatose Takeuchi Mikiko woke up.

After waking up, Takeuchi Mikiko was agitated and she kept shrieking out as she struggled, attempting to escape.

These people had broken into her house and kidnapped her, then moved to occupy her house. Well, those US dollars were certainly tempting...

However... at present, that biker gang with Molotov cocktails had started a fire to her house!

These were not the things that a young girl could mentally accept.

Together, Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao comforted Takeuchi Mikiko and assured her that they would let her go tomorrow morning while giving her a sum of money. It was only then that the Japanese girl calmed down.

“What a rookie Guild Leader,” Nicole hugged her arms as she sat on the last row of the minibus, watching both Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao comforting Takeuchi Mikiko. She pursed her lips to the side with disdain.

Then, she turned to the two brothers who sat closest to her, Lun Tai and Bei Tai. “I am very puzzled. Why would veterans such as you obey such a rookie Guild Leader?”

Lun Tai glanced at Nicole and replied with a cold tone. “He may be a rookie, a soft-hearted, kind-hearted person who is unsuited to this cruel game, but... at least I can tell that following him, I would not have to worry about being abandoned or betrayed. Did you know? In the last instance dungeon, he took the initiative to leave behind to become a bait, giving away the chance of surviving to others. This kind of person is a big fool, but... there are too few of these fools these days.”

“Your guild is just bonkers. A soft-hearted guy who is too kind for his own good as a Guild Leader. Not to mention, he is also a rookie. As for the guild members, there are only two veterans while the rest are rookies as well. Most interestingly, they even have an under aged girl,” Nicole could not help but smile bitterly. “I bet this guild won’t even survive past 3 instance dungeons.”

“... thank you for your evaluation,” Chen Xiaolian suddenly came over, stopping before Nicole. “As it happens, this is my 3rd instance dungeon. I think that I should be able to make it through this one.”

Soo Soo, who was following Chen Xiaolian tightly gripped Chen Xiaolian’s sleeves and she directed a cold stare at Nicole. Frowning, she said in a frosty voice. “I hate you. If you continue saying bad things about Xiaolian oppa, I’ll burn you.”

“Soo Soo! Little girls should not say things like that,” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile and rubbed Soo Soo’s head. Then, he pulled her to another row of seats.

Nicole revealed an odd expression and she abruptly covered her mouth as she whispered to Lun Tai. “Is your Guild Leader a lolicon?”

“... he personally denies it. Who knows?” Lun Tai smirked.

...

They finally made it through the night.

Although the parking lot they were in was three levels below ground where day light could not reach, everyone was not able to rest. They kept looking at the time.

At eight in the morning, Chen Xiaolian brought Qiao Qiao and Roddy with him as they went above ground to explore the area around the building.

Chen Xiaolian chose a spot on the third floor of the building with good line of sight and left Roddy there to monitor the area.

Next, Chen Xiaolian brought Qiao Qiao together to explore the inner area of the building... the building was empty, devoid of any workers. Although they found computers, they were unable to connect to any network. Due to the power blackout, there was no network available.

In the street far away, shrill sounds of sirens could still be heard from time to time. However, this street remained fairly quiet.

As for the street itself, it was mostly empty of pedestrians. Occasionally, there would be some who would walk through in a hurry and panic, their hands holding onto large and small bags. Who knew if they had purchased it or stolen it?

Chen Xiaolian patted his cheeks with cold water to freshen himself. One day and night without rest, and the continuous battle from before caused Chen Xiaolian to feel very tired.

Qiao Qiao who was next to him produced a piece of towel to help wipe his face. She whispered. "You can take a short rest. I'll help lookout for you."

"I am the Guild Leader," Chen Xiaolian sighed. "Anyone can be given the luxury of sleeping, but not me. Besides... I am unable to sleep as well."

"The countdown is about to end," Qiao Qiao said in a low tone. "After the first phase ends, what will happen next? Are you able to guess?"

"I do not know. However, I think it must have something to do with the storyline about that mysterious research and development institute," Chen Xiaolian pondered. "The instance dungeon area is Tokyo... the first

phase of the quest is to collect five energy sources. I think that the second phase must have something to do with those energy sources.”

...

Time slowly ticked by until afternoon arrived.

The remaining time on the countdown gradually lessened until it finally entered the last few seconds.

Everyone rose up, looking more alert!

This moment of waiting for the countdown to end was too hard to bear!

“Five, four, three, two, one ...” Chen Xiaolian mumbled out the countdown.

[System prompt...].

“It’s here! Right on time!” Chen Xiaolian was on his toes.

[System prompt: The first phase of the quest is over. The participants who failed to complete the quest would be forcibly teleported out of the instance dungeon area. Following a comprehensive assessment by the system, punishment will be allocated. Teleportation begins immediately!].

[System prompt: The second phase of the quest begins. All participants and teams that succeeded in collecting 5 energy sources have earned the qualifications to participate in the second phase of the instance dungeon. The second phase of the quest will be randomly given to each participant or Team Leader through the system. Please take note.].

Chen Xiaolian’s mind was spurred!

He was able to take note of several key words.

The second phase of the quest... randomly given!

Random!

In other words... for most of the participants of the second phase of the quest, their quest would likely be different!

Random!

Everyone in the team had already received the two system prompts and they now turned to look at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and checked his own personal system...

After he was done reading the second phase of the quest assigned to his personal system, Chen Xiaolian revealed an incredulous expression on his face.

[System notification: Meteor Rock Guild has acquired the qualifications to the second phase of the quest. The assigned quest is as follows: Please use the fastest method to find the person shown below. Safeguard and escort this person as fast as you can to the specified coordinates.

[If the quest target dies before the quest target could be found, system will determine that you have failed the quest!

[If the quest target dies in the escorting process, system will determine that you have failed the quest!

[Failing the quest will lead to system punishment.]

Beneath the notification was a picture. It was clearly a passport type photo, one devoid of PS (photoshop) or modifications to it.

On the photo was a pleasant looking Japanese girl. She looked young, about 15 to 16 years old. She was smiling agreeably and she had the prominent ears unique to Japanese girls, looking very cute and adorable.

The thing that caused Chen Xiaolian's eyes to bulge out was that the girl displayed on the interface was surprisingly...

He turned abruptly and looked at someone who was huddling down in a corner...

Takeuchi Mikiko!

"This, is this coincidence... or an explosive stroke of fortune?" Chen Xiaolian mumbled to himself.

...

Chapter 129: Changing Waterguns for Cannons

After Chen Xiaolian shared out the quest details and the picture to his team members, all of them were speechless.

Nicole stared at Chen Xiaolian with an odd expression and mumbled something in a low tone.

“What did you say?” Roddy, who was seated beside Nicole glanced at the female Mech pilot.

“I said: Is your Guild Leader by chance the illegitimate son of the system? How could there be such a kind of good luck? We just so happened to bring an ordinary person with us. But that ordinary person turned out to be the target that the system notified us to protect.”

The reckless Roddy shrugged his shoulders and replied. “That’s nothing big. It is probably just a coincidence.”

“Bloody Hell! Do you not realize how much of an advantage we have gained here?” Nicole’s eyes bulged out. “Generally speaking, the second phase of the quest would have a higher level of difficulty compared to the first phase. This time, the quest only gave us a picture, demanding us to protect the target while escorting her to the designated location.

“If we are to follow the normal procedures, the hardest part should be to figure out how to find the quest target!

“Consider how big Tokyo is and the tens of millions of people within it! It only gave us one picture! No name, no address, nothing! We don’t have any way to search her up at all! Even if we are to enter the police database, we will still need to search one by one, comparing the picture!

“Do you have any idea how much work is needed? Can you imagine how difficult those efforts are?

“But now, this chick is just right beside us! We are now able to leave out the most troublesome part of this quest!

“From the moment the second phase of the quest began, we had already sprinted far ahead of the other participants!

“If this is a marathon, it would be the equivalent of us having crossed one third of the distance while the other competitors have just set off from the starting line!

“Such a huge advantage, you dared call it nothing?”

Roddy was at a loss for words.

“Thankfully, we did not toss this girl out halfway through,” Lun Tai was relieved. “Truthfully, I was somewhat against the idea of bringing this girl along as I felt her to be very cumbersome. But now... Guild Leader, even though you are too kind for your own good, good deeds do get rewarded.”

Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. “Is that supposed to be a praise?”

Chen Xiaolian patted the armrest before him as he slowly said. “Now, let us discuss the second phase of the quest. Let us discuss it together.”

As the leader, Chen Xiaolian first expressed his own analysis.

“In the quest, it is stated that if the quest target were to die before we found her, then we will have failed the quest. If the quest target dies during the escorting process, then the quest will also fail.

“From what we can see, we may encounter quite a number of problems.

“First, the quest target will encounter unknown dangers! Take note of this, according to the system prompt, the quest target could potentially die even before we find her... here comes the question: Who or what will become a threat to her life?

“I doubt it’s be as simple as a chaotic Tokyo or some robbers or criminals coming after her – the system would never give us such a simple quest.

“Thus, I feel that we could make several conjectures.

“According to the system prompt, I speculate that every participant with the qualification to this second phase of the quest will be given a different quest. As stated by the system, it is ‘random’.

“Then... could it be... the ones to pose danger to the quest target will be the other participants?”

“In other words, it is possible that while our quest is to protect the quest target, there will be other participants whose quest is to kill the quest target?”

“It is possible,” Nicole nodded.

“Of course, this is not the only possibility. There is another possibility... could it be that monsters will appear within this instance dungeon and harm the quest target?”

“Monsters?” Roddy widened his eyes. “Tokyo had already fallen into a state of chaos once before. If any monsters were to appear... is it going to create a Wicked City instance dungeon [1]?”

“It’s not impossible,” Chen Xiaolian sneered. “As Lun Tai mentioned, the system is so outrageous that I would not be surprised even if everyone in Tokyo is turned into Smurfs.”

“In short, regardless of it being other participants or monsters brought out by the system, there will be a certain force moving with the objective of harming the quest target,” Chen Xiaolian made his speculation. “This may be the biggest obstacle facing us as we attempt to complete the second phase of the quest.”

This opinion of his was agreed upon by everyone present.

Nicole sat there as she silently listened to Chen Xiaolian’s analysis.

She secret gave a sigh. Even though this rookie Guild Leader’s strength is only average, he has made me view him in a new light.

Strength can be improved, but this level of mind... this level headed intellect and analysis capability is indeed rare.

“The second key point is the escort destination,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “I have checked the map earlier. That location... lies outside Tokyo city!”

Everyone was shocked as they simply sat there.

“In other words, we can now leave Tokyo?” Qiao Qiao furrowed her

brows. "The instance dungeon restriction is lifted?"

"Not necessarily," Chen Xiaolian deliberated. "Do you still recall the train we took to the northwest? Perhaps... that kind of situation would occur. Under a designated small and particular environment, we will be absorbed into the instance dungeon area. [2]"

"Where does the coordinates point to?" Nicole asked with a serious tone.

"The address is Saitama Prefecture, north of Tokyo," Chen Xiaolian answered. "If we make our way using a car, we will probably require half a day."

"Public transportation should all have stopped their operations. As for trains, it is likely under heavy supervision. Even if it can be used, armed police officers will defend it. Considering that we are now wanted men, it is best if we do not go look for trouble," Lun Tai forwarded his opinion. "Let's use this minibus and find a place to refuel. Then, we'll drive it all the way to Saitama Prefecture."

"Agreed!"

"Agreed!"

All the team members expressed their agreement with Lun Tai's opinion. Chen Xiaolian too, nodded. "I agree as well. All right, prepare to set off! First, distribute weapons and equipment. Lun Tai, Bei Tai, we need some firearms. Do you still have any spare weapons?"

Lun Tai gave a pained smile. "We came to Japan in order to visit Zero City, not to participate in an instance dungeon. Due to that, I did not prepare too many weapons. Bei Tai's M16 is almost out of bullets as well."

"We'll have to think of ways to get our hands on some on the way. If we meet small groups of police officers, we can go for it," Bei Tai licked his lips. "If we could find a tank, that would be swell."

"The best would certainly be that Thunderstorm Tank!" Roddy rubbed his palms gleefully. "If only we could snatch one back then, that would have been great!"

“Don’t think of useless matters,” Chen Xiaolian glanced at Roddy. “I agree with Bei Tai’s suggestion. If the conditions permits... committing a crime once is not an issue.”

Just then, Nicole suddenly laughed. “If its ordinary firearms you are looking for, I can provide some.”

“You?” Chen Xiaolian looked at Nicole with a puzzled expression.

...

A few minutes later, they were stupefied by the pile of firearms before them.

Bei Tai’s pair of eyes shone and he moved forward. Pulling one out by grabbing the folding rifle butt, he performed a shooting gesture with it and laughed. “Howa Type 89 assault rifle! Haha! The standard Japanese issue!”

He also picked up a handgun. “PS9, not bad.”

Roddy too, had already moved forward to pick up a rifle. “Howa Goldenbear! Haha, I will use this one! I like using sniper rifles!”

Looking at the pile of firearms lying on the floor, in addition to the two ammunition boxes beside, Chen Xiaolian turned to Nicole. “Where did you get these things?”

“Yesterday. Before I found your team, I robbed a squad of Special Assault Team,” Nicole replied with indifference. “I noticed these weapons there. Since I was there, I might as well take it with me.”

Rob a squad of Special Assault Team... welp! To be able to rob Japan’s special anti-terrorist forces, this girl is really powerful!

As he did not know much about firearms, Chen Xiaolian followed Bei Tai’s suggestion and picked an MP5 submachine gun.

“Guild Leader, just use this one. It has a quick rate of fire and low recoil.”

As he spoke, Bei Tai also kept several tactical grenades into his pocket.

Soon, they also changed their equipment.

While robbing the Special Assault Team's squad, Nicole also looted their equipment as well. Even tactical helmets and vests could be found there.

Chen Xiaolian chose one set for himself and wore two flares on the tactical vest. After considering for a moment, he also picked up a bullet-proof shield and tested its weight.

"This is what you call changing water guns for cannons!" Roddy was excited [3]. He was already fully decked out with the Howa Goldenbear sniper rifle slung over his shoulder. He made several striking poses and brought out his mobile phone to take a few selfies.

Nicole spoke with indifference. "It seems you still do not have enough storage equipment. In the future, when you do have it, you should set aside some fixed equipment to carry with you at all times. Consider this a suggestion."

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

Storage equipment was something that their guild was sorely lacking.

At present, only the veterans Lun Tai and Bei Tai have this storage equipment.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai have a storage tactical box each. During normal circumstances, this storage tactical box could be kept inside the system's Item Box. It has a size of two cubic metres, and it could store any non-living matter inside.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai's firearms were all placed there to be carried with them at all times.

This storage equipment was very expensive. The thought of purchasing it from the Exchange System caused a severe amount of angst for Chen Xiaolian.

Furthermore... the larger the storage space of the equipment, the higher the price!

The tactical box used by Lun Tai and Bei Tai only required a few hundred points. However, the amount of storage space available was too small. Thus, Chen Xiaolian did not buy it.

Observing Nicole's ability to pull out tens of different firearms and ammunitions – he was certain that the storage space of her storage equipment must certainly be very big!

As expected, Chen Xiaolian's guess was confirmed.

"We also need a spare mode of transportation," Nicole said indifferently. "In case we encounter a special circumstance while we are on the way and this minibus breaks down, we will need a spare mode of transportation. I will go to the parking lot to see if there are any suitable vehicles."

"How many items can your storage equipment keep? Won't a car be a problem?" Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

"It won't be a problem to keep another two cars inside," Nicole replied with indifference. "Do not feel surprised. We Floating Angels possess abilities of the technological type after all. As for the top Angels, like our Twelve Angels, each of their storage equipment is sufficient to store up a Mech. I am not talking about that small Sentinel Type Mech, but the real big deal."

Sto... store a Mech?!

Chen Xiaolian was left speechless.

The underground parking lot that they were in was located below a big commercial building. With Tokyo in a state of chaos, it was only natural that many cars would be abandoned here.

After walking casually around once, she picked two SUVs as spare transportation vehicles and kept them into her storage equipment.

"My Floater still needs six hours to recharge its energy. Thus, within these six hours, I will not be able to display a strong amount of battle strength," Nicole slowly said. "However, after the six hours have passed, I will fight with everything I have and not hold back to complete this

quest. We are all in the same boat after all. This is my promise to you.”

Chen Xiaolian thought about what she said and raised his right hand to slap onto Nicole’s palm.

...

After one day and one night, the streets of Tokyo have yet to stabilize. Instead, the chaos appeared to be slowly spreading.

Their minibus moved out of the parking lot and into the streets. On the way, they passed through several commercial districts. There, they saw that the shops by the street have been smashed into and looted.

Some convenience stores had its doors smashed open and the food and beverages inside were all swiped clean. Some other shops had their windows shattered and the interior was left a pile of mess.

Certain places were also lit on fire. Along the way, they caught sight of pedestrians hurrying away while police cars and fire trucks roared past them.

Twice, they had encountered police officers displaying their cards and requesting the cars to stop for an inspection. Roddy who was in the driver’s seat ignored them and simply stepped down on the gas pedal.

In less than an hour’s time, two police cars had appeared behind their minibus.

“It seems the police are really exhausted with all this rushing about,” Chen Xiaolian glanced at the police cars behind them. “It took them this long to chase up to us. Clearly, they do not have enough forces within the police department.”

“The chaos will subside soon,” Nicole shook her head. “The chaos yesterday was mostly caused by participants of this game like us. Starting up a tank, driving it around the streets and opening fire with it. Such a degree of chaos is not something that normal police officers could deal with. Now that the second phase of the quest has begun, many participants have been eliminated, leaving a smaller number of participants whom all have their own quest targets. Their movements

this time should not be as big as last time. The efficiency of the Japanese police is still very high.”

“Xiaolian! Something about the police cars behind us doesn’t seem right,” Roddy frowned. “They have followed us through several streets without rushing forward, only following us from behind. Also... I feel that the police cars are being driven in a drunken manner.”

“Hmm?”

Chen Xiaolian’s heart skipped a beat and he quickly ran to the rear side of the minibus to observe for a few seconds. He immediately saw that something was indeed amiss.

The two police cars were trailing behind them while putting up a distance that was neither too short nor too far. Additionally... Roddy was right in that the police cars were swerving about, as though its drivers were drunk.

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes to peer at the driver’s seat of the police cars only to see a grim, emotionless expression on the face of the police officer.

Chen Xiaolian’s instinct made him feel that something was amiss.

“Throw them off our tail first!”

Chen Xiaolian flipped open the window, produced two tactical grenades, bit out their rings and threw them out.

He did not have any intention to kill; those grenades were thrown to the side of the street.

Two explosions boomed out and two cars parked beside the street were set on fire as an orange coloured flame spread out in all directions!

A car was directly flipped upside down and it skidded horizontally through the street!

One of the police cars slammed head first into the car! The front side of the police car was immediately dented inwards. However, the police car did not stop; instead, it continued to ram its way through and continued

stagging forward in pursuit.

“Something is not right!” Chen Xiaolian’s face twisted.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly noticed that the door to the first police car’s front passenger seat was opening up! After being opened, the door smashed into a car by the roadside and was sent flying.

As for the police officer, his hands and legs were on the move as he climbed out of the front seat and onto the roof of the police car!

His actions seemed rather awkward, but were in fact very stable! He stood atop the roof of the police car, his body slanting slightly amidst the buffeting winds. The wind had blown away his cap while his hair turned into a disorderly mess...

Subsequently...

“Be careful!” Chen Xiaolian abruptly shouted out loud! He quickly raised the MP5 in his hand and without hesitation, let loose a barrage of bullets forward!

The police officer standing on the roof of the police car had already leapt high up into the air! His body flew over a distance of more than 20 metres and he slammed onto the back of the minibus!

The tremendous amount of strength behind the jump caused the back part of the minibus to sink inwards. The police officer in question had his uniform torn apart and blood covered his body. However, he extended his hand and crawled in through the torn part on the back of the minibus!

1 Wicked City is a Japanese anime that tells about the coexistence of the human world and the demon world and the threats it face in maintaining peace between the two worlds.

2 I believe the author is referring to their trip to Shaanxi where Chen Xiaolian met Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo, Han Bi and the two veteran Awakened ones (Chapter 39). I personally call it the Lolicon Arc... Anyways, the author is probably making a comparison to that situation.

3 The title of 'changing waterguns for cannons' is a phrase used to indicate when a person is in a much better and improved condition. Eg. Someone who used to ride only a rusty bicycle can now afford a brand new BMW.

Chapter 130: Monster

Chen Xiaolian pulled the trigger and a hail of bullets struck the police officer's body, sending his flesh flying around!

Several bullets pierced directly through the officer's face and both his left eye and left side of his face were torn open.

However, the officer only staggered for a brief moment before opening his mouth at Chen Xiaolian. He then let out a loud howl!

The size of his opened mouth was as big as a hippopotamus! The insides of his mouth was lined with fangs!

At the same time, his body swelled up. The rapidly expanding body ripped the police uniform apart as his body instantly rose to a height of 2 metres! Blood trickled out from every part of his muscle tissues, his skin having torn apart in the process.

His four limbs turned elongated and bent, making him look like a monster. With a manic howl, he pounced towards Chen Xiaolian!

Chen Xiaolian felt the foul stink of fish blowing strongly against his face and he quickly took a few steps back. But, the incoming fellow managed to pin him onto the ground and his jaws snapped out towards Chen Xiaolian's neck! Chen Xiaolian exerted his all, using his elbows to stop the other party's neck before letting loose a vicious kick using both legs. His kick sent the fellow flying off his body!

Chen Xiaolian quickly retreated as he got up and heard Nicole's voice from behind.

"Step aside!"

Chen Xiaolian quickly lowered his head as Nicole stepped forward. In her hands was a Remington shotgun!

Bang!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Nicole continued firing and shells flew out.

The monster had just managed to get up only to be greeted with a continuous barrage from the shotgun! The high amount of knockback power from the shotgun caused the monster to retreat step after step from the continuous shots and his flesh showered all over.

Finally, Nicole shot out one last shell at the monster that was forced to the rear part of the minibus, blasting it off the vehicle!

“What the Hell is that thing?” Chen Xiaolian jumped up as he gasped for breath.

“Clearly, that is the thing that will threaten the safety of our quest target!” Nicole gritted her teeth.

Chen Xiaolian raised his submachine gun and shouted out. “Everyone, get ready to open fire simultaneously!”

The monster that was blasted out of the minibus rolled on the street a few times before crawling up the other police car that was tailing them. It then rapidly chased after them!

At that moment, another two police cars emerged from an intersection behind them, leading to a total of four police cars chasing after them.

This time though, they were clearly driving at a higher speed as they chased the minibus in frenzy. They were also attempting to overtake the minibus from both sides!

“Roddy! Keep going and maintain the speed!” Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. “Lun Tai, Bei Tai, take care of the left side! Qiao Qiao, Xia Xiaolei, take care of the right side! No need to save up ammo! We cannot allow them to get inside! Nicole, we will be responsible for the back!”

Sharp screams rang out from within the minibus as Takeuchi Mikiko, who was seated at the front row of seats covered her ears and screamed out in shock, her face pale. Beside her, Soo Soo was there with a calm expression on her face. She lightly pinched Takeuchi Mikiko’s arm.

“Are you afraid? Then, scream. Scream out all the terror within your heart... scream it all out and you won’t be afraid anymore.”

The little girl's icy tone caused Takeuchi Mikiko to freeze for a moment. She then threw a haggard look at Soo Soo. "You... are not afraid?"

"Why should I be scared?" Soo Soo suddenly revealed a smile. "Oppa and unnie are both here with me."

After saying that, Soo Soo turned around and stood before Takeuchi Mikiko's body. "Relax, I will be in front to protect you."

"Eh? You?"

"I do not like you, but oppa said, if you die, then we will fail."

...

Boom!

Another figure leapt forward from the roof of a distant police car and sailed through the air towards them!

Their jumping ability was simply astonishing! They resembled a certain kind of insect – en, right! They have long arms and legs, giving them the general appearance of a flea.

Chen Xiaolian's MP5 poured out a fiery barrage of bullets. Receiving the brunt of those bullets, the monster screamed sharply as its arms and legs moved to crawl up the ceiling of their vehicle.

"Nicole!" Chen Xiaolian yelled.

Nicole quickly answered. "You take care of the back!"

The female Mech pilot pointed the shotgun at the roof and heard "pa da pa da" sounds, indicating something heavy was moving. Nicole pulled the trigger and her Remington shotgun blasted out!

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! After several shots were fired in succession, the roof of the minibus became filled with holes.

On their left and right hand sides, two police cars had already closed in on them. The members on both sides were firing, filling the bodies of the police cars with bullet holes. Sparks erupted from the hood of the police cars.

The monster within the police car had transformed! It extended its hand to tear out the metal roof before jumping forward!

“Go to Hell!”

Bei Tai howled out. The monster had leapt onto the minibus from the side; using both hands to grip onto the body of the minibus, it stuck its head in through the window and spread open its large mouth. Seeing that, Bei Tai quickly pulled out a hand grenade, bit off the ring and chucked it into the welcoming mouth of the monster.

With a boom, the monster’s abdomen thumped outwards before deflating. It then fell off the minibus like a rotten sack. The blast had formed a huge hole at its rear...

“Killed one!” Bei Tai laughed out. However, before he could finish his laugh, the face of Lun Tai who stood beside him fell. Lun Tai shouted out. “Get down!”

Bei Tai was surprised as he felt a sharp pain searing through his shoulder! Another monster had pushed itself inside through another window; it used its long hand, which resembled the long claws of an insect and shaped like a hook to slash Bei Tai’s body!

Bei Tai was wearing a protective vest. However, the sleeveless protective vest did not cover his arm and his right arm was pierced through!

Lun Tai moved forward and repelled the monster using the butt of his rifle. He then clutched onto Bei Tai and tossed him to the back. Next, he delivered a kick at the monster’s head, causing it to topple over and fall onto their bus’ passenger seat. Lun Tai followed up by rushing forward and stamping his foot down on the monster’s neck. After that, he pointed the muzzle of his rifle at the monster’s head and pulled the trigger!

Chug chug chug chug chug chug...

Lun Tai bellowed out and unloaded an entire magazine in this attack.

The monster’s head was shot to a pulp. However, it was extremely tenacious and its body seemed to be moving slightly.

Lun Tai roared out, grabbed hold of its limb and tossed it out of the window.

Chen Xiaolian who was holding the back was entangled in a tough battle. As a police car approached, he threw out two hand grenades in succession. However, he was not a professional member of the military and his calculations for the explosion's timing were inaccurate. The hand grenades he threw did not bring a huge amount of damage to the police car.

His MP5 had used up one whole magazine and the police car following behind had its windshield torn to pieces. The officer in the driver's seat was also covered in holes. However, the officer transformed into a monster after that. Despite being a monster, it continued to control the police car to slam forward brutally!

Bang!

The front part of the police car slammed onto the minibus, causing it to sway for a moment.

"Son of a bitch!" Chen Xiaolian's heart gave a pound and he shouted. "Everyone! Hold on tight!"

Chen Xiaolian then turned to Roddy and shouted. "Roddy! Brake!"

"Huh? Got it!" Roddy had faith in Chen Xiaolian's judgement; after hearing his words, Roddy showed no hesitation and he immediately stamped down on the brakes until its limit.

The minibus suddenly braked and its body shuddered to a halt. The police car behind slammed into the minibus!

The body of the police car bore right into the minibus!

As for Chen Xiaolian, he quickly strode forward. Stepping on the hood of the police car, he aimed his MP5 at the monster's head and unleashed a flurry of bullets!

As the hail of bullets shot down, the monster's head was turned into a broken watermelon. Chen Xiaolian produced a hand grenade, turned his

head around to face the bus and shouted. "Roddy, drive!"

Roddy stepped heavily on the throttle and the minibus charged forth. Meanwhile, Chen Xiaolian tossed the hand grenade into the police car...

With a loud explosion, the police car was blown up and it turned over before skidding off...

"There is another one!"

Qiao Qiao and Xia Xiaolei was defending the left side. Due to the abrupt braking performed by their minibus earlier, a police car had shot past them. Seeing that the bus had continued moving, a monster emerged from the police car and proceeded to climb onto the roof of the police car.

"Son of a bitch!" Chen Xiaolian cursed out. He used both hands to grab the window and pushed himself out of the minibus, climbing onto the roof as well.

"Xiaolian?" Qiao Qiao exclaimed in shock. Chen Xiaolian reached the rooftop and knelt down as he pulled the bolt on the rifle. After changing a new magazine, he opened fire at the monster situated atop the police car.

Chug chug chug chug chug chug...

The bullets struck the police car, causing sparks to fly about. Then, Lun Tai joined in and blasted it and it swerved. The monster on top of the police car was thrown off as a result!

The minibus then drove over the monster while crunching over its body.

The body of the minibus shook as it did so and Chen Xiaolian checked the monster as it appeared beneath the minibus...

Infuriatingly, the monster was not killed. Instead, it climbed back up and started chasing after the minibus!

The monster ran at an amazing speed! Running on feet while utilizing both arms and legs, it resembled a flea that was running and jumping!

Chen Xiaolian knelt on the roof and aimed his MP5. He then opened fire.

Ka ka...

“I’m out of bullets!” Chen Xiaolian inhaled. Just as he was about to get back into the minibus, the monster suddenly jumped out through the air and fell heavily onto the roof! Part of the metal roof was depressed down as a result.

“Go to Hell!”

Chen Xiaolian let go of the submachine gun and summoned out the Bone Crusher Axe, hacking forward.

Head Cleaver!

The Bone Crusher Axe hacked down directly onto the monster’s head! Blood sprayed out, covering Chen Xiaolian’s face.

He quickly pulled the axe... Ear Gouger!

Impish Teeth Displacer!

After utilizing all three axe moves, the monster’s head was cut in half and its body tilted to the side and fell off the minibus.

Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief and he wiped away the blood on his face.

By then, the minibus had already driven up into a huge bridge.

Chen Xiaolian watched as the architecture of the bridge flashed through both sides of their speeding vehicle. Their minibus sped through the centre of the bridge...

It was then he heard Roddy’s exclamation of surprise.

“Xiaolian! Up front!”

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to look forward and his face instantly fell!

Upon the surface of the bridge before them, several police cars were blocking the road... clearly, this was originally a police blockade.

However, the problem was...

As of this moment, there was a group of black coloured monsters roaming slowly around the vicinity of the police cars!

The tattered uniform remains on their bodies indicated that they were originally the Japanese police officers! However, at an unknown moment in time, they had transformed into monsters.

A brief glance revealed that there were at least a hundred of them! Those monsters had been swaying about at their spot. Suddenly, it was as though an unknown influence had overcome them and they abruptly locked their eyes onto the incoming minibus!

After letting out a wild roar, they all charged toward the minibus!

...

Chapter 131: Recognition and Trust

“I’ll be damned!”

Roddy slammed his foot down on the brake and their minibus halted in the middle of the road.

The monsters far away bolted toward them. The distance between them was now only an estimated 100 metres.

Chen Xiaolian jumped into the bus through the window.

“What now?” Roddy turned his head to look at Chen Xiaolian.

“Hurry up and turn around!” Lun Tai shouted. “There’s too many of them!”

“No!” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes struggled momentarily. Then, he gritted his teeth and shouted. “Roddy! Start it up and charge forward! Forward at full speed! We cannot retreat!”

“What?” Lun Tai was furious. “Xiaolian, did you not see...”

“Listen to me and do as I say! There is no time to explain! Everyone, pay attention! Qiao Qiao, look after Takeuchi Mikiko! Lun Tai, Bei Tai, take care of the two sides. I will take care of the front. Nicole, you take the centre!”

Lun Tai’s face distorted but he finally said in a firm tone. “All right, you are the Guild Leader!”

Their vehicle roared and they charged forward!

Bei Tai’s arm was covered in blood. But he clenched his teeth and used his other arm to hold his weapon. “All right! Chen Xiaolian! We will trust you on this one! Hopefully, you are not making a mistake!”

Chen Xiaolian did not have the time to explain as he leapt to the front. Standing beside Roddy, he slammed open the side window and opened fire wildly.

Chug chug chug chug

The sound of gunfire rang out without respite and the minibus barrelled forth like a monster!

The minibus raced forward at full speed. Its horsepower and weight came together to turn it into a tank like existence!

The monsters ran toward them across the surface of the road. The minibus charged into the incoming crowd of monsters, first sending several monsters flying away, some of them directly falling off the bridge.

Next, the minibus steamrolled its way through!

The body of their vehicle shook continuously and the sharp shrieks of the monsters rang out from the outside. Chen Xiaolian spared a glance at the rear view mirror and saw that no small number of monsters was sent rolling backwards after emerging from under the wheels of their minibus.

“Take care of the two sides!”

Chen Xiaolian yelled out.

Although the minibus was charging ahead at full speed, monsters were still climbing up the two sides! These monsters possessed tall bodies, long arms and legs. Their fingers curved into sharp hooks and they easily pierced through the metal body of the bus! Their fingers were like hooks!

Some monsters hung onto the two sides of the vehicle and the vehicle’s movement lurched non-stop.

Lun Tai had already opened up a window, unleashing a barrage of bullets madly. The monsters were struck one after another as they fell down...

Bei Tai’s side was more pressing. He could only use one hand to hold onto his rifle and open fire, causing a reduction in his accuracy. Seeing that two monsters had climbed onto their bus and were about to enter through the windows, Chen Xiaolian rushed to the side. As his submachine gun had run out of bullets, Chen Xiaolian just pulled out his PS9 semi-automatic and pointed it at the monster’s forehead.

“Get out of my car!”

Bang bang bang bang bang...

In just one breath of time, Chen Xiaolian emptied his magazine and the monster was forced off the bus!

Then, he turned around to see that a monster had entered and was pressing down on Bei Tai. Showing no hesitation, Chen Xiaolian summoned out Bone Crusher Axe. Seeing that he would not reach Bei Tai in time, he chose to hurl the axe forward!

With a bang, the Bone Crusher Axe hacked into the monster's head from behind! After having its head cleaved into, the monster's body tilted to the side and Bei Tai let out a sigh of relief. He turned his body and rolled out of the way.

Nicole stepped forward, her Remington shotgun firing out consecutively and the monster was turned into Swiss cheese.

Boom!

Their bus had smashed aside the two police cars obstructing the road, punching out a gap in the middle of the two police cars and breaking out of the closure...

"Victory is in sight!"

Chen Xiaolian panted and howled out in a loud voice. "Finish off the last of them!"

There were still monsters crawling in from the two sides of the bus. Lun Tai frantically emptied his ammunition at them. Qiao Qiao was kneeling beside Takeuchi Mikiko and she fired at the monsters to repel them.

Chen Xiaolian was no longer able to help out much and he summoned out Garfield instead.

The Four-Eyed War Cats appeared within the vehicle, their massive bodies taking up nearly half the available space of the bus!

Garfield whose evolution had given him metallic claws, roared out and launched a Tiger Rush at a monster, pinning it down on the floor! His pair of claws instantly crushed the monster's sternum. Opening his huge

mouth, Garfield tore the monster in half!

There were three Garfield doppelgangers. The other doppelgangers quickly made short work of the other monsters who managed to slip into the bus. Feeling exhausted, Chen Xiaolian could only sit on the floor and gasp for breath. Even though he saw that the dangers have been eliminated, he dared not summon back Garfield. Instead, he had Garfield sit inside the bus.

Chen Xiaolian gasped for breath and glanced at his own body.

In the fight earlier, the monsters had clawed at several areas of his body, each leaving bloody cuts on him.

“Son of a bitch... I won’t get infected like Resident Evil, will I?” Chen Xiaolian grumbled.

“We charged through!”

Roddy who was seated in the driver’s seat was also sweating all over, seemingly exhausted. He shouted out. “We managed to charge through!”

Their vehicle rapidly moved out of the bridge and onto flat ground. They sped hastily through the road – no monsters or police cars chased them anymore.

“Water, can someone give me water?” Chen Xiaolian sighed.

The adjacent Qiao Qiao had already unscrewed a bottle of mineral water and handed it over. Chen Xiaolian gulped down several mouthfuls of water. Then, he poured the remainder onto his wounds. After pondering, he decided not to use Healing Type Beast Blood – superficial injuries such as these can be recovered quickly, given his [B] Class Physique.

Bei Tai’s injuries were somewhat heavy. He had been constantly getting the short end of the stick since last night.

First, the car driven by the Angel Killer, Tian Lie, had pummelled him. In the battle just then, no one suffered much. However, Bei Tai had once again been accidentally wounded.

Lun Tai had already taken out a first-aid kit to bandage his wounds. Just as he was about to give Bei Tai a Healing Type Beast Blood, Nicole stopped Lun Tai's hand. She produced an item and handed it over. "Use this, its effect will be better than Healing Beast Blood. This is a medicine produced by Zero City. Also... you probably do not know this. Using too much Healing Beast Blood will put a big burden on the body."

"... thank you," Lun Tai looked at Nicole and said in a solemn manner.

Nicole smiled. Then, she turned to face Chen Xiaolian. "Now... can you please explain, Sir Temporary Guild Leader? Back then, you clearly could order a retreat for us to avoid those monsters. Why do you insist on going forward?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Nicole and then at the grim-faced Lun Tai.

Chen Xiaolian slowly spoke out. "I do not have sufficient evidence. However, I believe in my judgement. The reason I wanted to move forward is... her!"

Chen Xiaolian pointed at Takeuchi Mikiko.

"The police cars were adamantly following us, refusing to back away. Not only that, other police cars were also lured over... I deduced that our vehicle may have something, which lured those monsters over," Chen Xiaolian quickly explained. "Then, there is the blockade on the bridge. The police-turned-monsters were originally stumbling about in the area. However, once we got close, they seemingly became mad and charged over. I believe that they were attracted by something."

"I believe this source of attraction is this person that we should protect."

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian glanced around. Seeing no one objecting, he continued. "The quest given by the system had clearly stated, our quest target will face threats to her life. As of now, it appears that those monsters are it. These monsters will be attracted by the quest target and they will attempt to kill her.

"While we were on the way earlier, there were only two police cars

chasing after us. Then, it became four... if we had turned back when we were on the bridge and return to that district, I fear... we might attract even more of those monsters over!

“The road that we have taken... that district will certainly contain even more monsters who have gathered together to chase after us. If we were to turn back at that juncture... I fear that our situation would not be any better compared to that of the bridge!

“Our objective is to escort her to the designated location as soon as possible. Since that is the case... rather than turn back, why not charge forward?

“If we had turned around back then... that would give the monsters more time to assemble their forces. The gravity of our situation would only increase!”

Just then, Chen Xiaolian suddenly received a prompt from the system.

[System prompt: Meteor Rock Guild has successfully reached their quest target and made contact with the hunters. Second phase's storyline activated. After five minutes, bio-transformed monsters will appear throughout Tokyo City. Area of effect: All instance dungeon area within Tokyo].

Chen Xiaolian remained silent and shared the prompt with his team.

Following several seconds of silence, Nicole opened her mouth.

“You were right,” Nicole nodded her head. “If we had turned back around, we would be in trouble. Bloody Hell... the entirety of Tokyo will transform into monsters? If we had turned back earlier, we will be trapped inside the city district! Just consider how many people are there within Tokyo. Those endless waves of monsters would pounce on us from all directions...”

Lun Tai suddenly stood up and walked to stand before Chen Xiaolian.

He then extended his right hand towards Chen Xiaolian.

“From now on, I will recognize you as a true Guild Leader! I will also

fully accept any order you give!”

Chen Xiaolian looked into Lun Tai’s eyes and he slowly grasped his right hand. “Thank you for your trust!”

“Your actions have earned my trust!” Lun Tai nodded his head.

“Enough! Are you two adult males done creeping us out?”

Roddy who was driving suddenly turned his head and shouted. “Where do we go next? There is a main intersection up ahead.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled and walked up towards Roddy. Taking out the map, he gave it to Roddy to peruse.

“Saitama Prefecture, Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel!”

“What? That legendary infamous underground drainage system of Tokyo? The place known as the ‘Underground City’?” Roddy was instantly excited.

Chen Xiaolian left the map with Roddy and walked back into the bus. He then sat before Takeuchi Mikiko.

“Can I talk to you?”

Chen Xiaolian did his best to use a steady tone to speak out.

Takeuchi Mikiko grasped her head, burying her head down. She shook her head vigorously and cried out as she trembled. “I beg you, I beg you to let me go! I beg you, please just let me go! I want to go home... I don’t need your money anymore. I don’t need any of them! I want to go home! I beg you...”

...

Chapter 132: Conflict

Takeuchi Mikiko had clearly lost her ability to stay calm. She grabbed her head and wailed out. Suddenly, she screamed, jumped and scrambled in an attempt to climb out through the window.

Considering their bus was speeding through the road, if this girl was to jump out, the most likely scenario would be her suffering from grievous injuries or simply dying on the spot. Chen Xiaolian quickly rushed forward and pulled the girl back down. He used too much strength and Takeuchi Mikiko fell inside, plopping on her butt upon the bus floor. She then let out another wail.

“I want to go home! I want to go home!”

“Shut up!”

Nicole suddenly moved forward. She grabbed Takeuchi Mikiko by her hair and pulled her head up. Nicole glared into the Japanese girl's eyes and coldly said. “We are not that patient! Little girl! If you do not want to suffer, it would be best for you to shut your mouth! Understand this! Back then, we were fighting to protect your life!”

Chen Xiaolian frowned and looked at Nicole. “That is enough, let her go. Let me talk to her.”

“I think I can be certain of your biggest weakness... you are too soft-hearted,” Nicole scowled. Ignoring all else, she moved to the other side, sat down and directed her gaze outside the window.

Chen Xiaolian lifted Takeuchi Mikiko up to the passenger seat and sat opposite her. He exhaled slowly, and then spoke out in a very slow and serious tone. “If you can first stop crying, we can talk reasonably, all right?”

Takeuchi Mikiko's body quivered and she raised her head. Her pair of eyes was as red as a rabbit's and she sniffed a few times. “You, are you willing to be reasonable?”

“Although my companion was being very harsh on you, she did speak

the truth! In that battle earlier, we were fighting to protect your life.”

“... I do not understand,” Takeuchi Mikiko appeared to be on the verge of mentally collapsing. “Those monsters... those police officers...”

“Listen to me, girl!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly held up his own MP5 submachine gun, holding it before Takeuchi Mikiko’s eyes. He said coldly. “Open your eyes and look properly! Look at what this is! This is not a toy!”

“...”

“You saw what happened earlier! Those monsters truly exists! They were right before you where you could see and hear them! If not for us stopping them, you would have had a taste of their claws and fangs!

“You saw us opening fire, saw the bullets piercing into the bodies of those monsters! You saw their flesh splattering all over, saw them being killed by us... saw our intense battle!

“Little girl, you had best understand something – if you still cannot understand, then you must force yourself to accept it!

“This... is not a dream! This is really happening!

“You are not watching a movie, not having a nightmare, not watching a horror movie!

“You are currently in a special circumstance! Not only you, the entirety of Tokyo is filled with these monsters! They now roam the streets, hunting and killing!

“Let you go home?

“Are you sure that is a good idea? By now, your house might have burnt down to ashes. Perhaps, it might currently be occupied by a horde of monsters! Say we consent to let you go... less than one minute after leaving us, you would end up encountering those monsters on the road and be torn to shreds!

“This is no joking matter! Not a movie, not a story!

“I will say this again. You had better force yourself to accept this reality!

“This is not a dream! Not something that would vanish just by screaming and crying!”

Takeuchi Mikiko appeared to have somewhat calmed down. She then asked in a tearful voice. “You... who are you people?”

“We...” Chen Xiaolian thought about it. If he were to tell her the truth, it would take too long. Additionally, it would be too cumbersome to explain. Thus, Chen Xiaolian decided to simply make up a story.

“We are members of a secret organization,” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “We came to Tokyo in order to carry out a special mission. Truth be told, this mission involves you! Our mission is to protect you so that those monsters cannot harm you.”

“Why me?” Takeuchi Mikiko’s eyes were wide open. Her curiosity made her forget about her fears for the time being. “I am just an ordinary girl. Those monsters, what do they have to do with me?”

“There is a very big connection,” Chen Xiaolian said softly. “Those monsters will only attack some special humans – unfortunately for you, you happen to be one of the special humans. We are only responsible for escorting you to a safe place. So, if you want to live, it would be best for you to cooperate with us. Be obedient! We will do our best to protect your from harm!”

“I am... special human?” Takeuchi Mikiko widened her eyes. Suddenly, her eyes flickered. “Does... does this have anything to do with my blood type?”

Blood type?

Chen Xiaolian’s mind raced and he looked at Takeuchi Mikiko expressionlessly. “En, it is your blood type.”

“My blood type is of the AB, Rh-negative type. My mother said before, my blood type is very, very rare. Ever since I was young, mother would take special care for me for fear that I might bleed from being injured.

She said that if I were to be wounded and need blood transfusion, things would become very, very difficult.”

Rh-negative type blood?

Chen Xiaolian was aware of this blood type.

Rh-negative blood was extremely rare amongst humans in and of itself! It was also known as the ‘Panda Blood’. [1]

As for this girl, not only was her blood of the Rh-negative type, it was also AB, Rh-negative! This was an even rarer existence amongst Rh-negative types!

It could be described as the ‘Panda Blood’ amongst ‘Panda Bloods’! The rarest amongst the rare!

Having suddenly acquired this information, countless speculations sprouted out from Chen Xiaolian’s mind. He subconsciously turned to look at his team members and realized that they were all casting complicated gazes at him.

“Hmmm...” Chen Xiaolian pondered and nodded at Takeuchi Mikiko. “That is right, it must be due to the rare and special properties of your blood type. That must be why you would become a target for those monsters. Right... what is your mother’s occupation?” Chen Xiaolian abruptly asked out of curiosity.

“My mother works in a large company. She is just an ordinary inventory administrator,” Takeuchi Mikiko replied.

Inventory administrator?

Chen Xiaolian’s heart felt somewhat disappointed.

Just now, he had thought of a possibility: Maybe, Takeuchi Mikiko’s mother is a key component in the storyline’s quest?

For example... a mad female scientist using her own daughter’s panda blood to conduct a biochemical experiment, leading to a disaster on the level of Resident Evil?

Enough... Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile and tapped his nose.

Could it be that it has been too long since I've written anything? Is that why I am unconsciously making up a story on my own?

Sigh... I nearly forgot. I am someone who writes novels.

"There is no need for you to worry too much. We are here to protect you. No matter what happens, we will not allow the monster to harm you. Then... we will send you to a safe place," Chen Xiaolian thought about it and continued making the story up. "Truthfully, we are something close to a mercenary organization. We were hired to specifically find someone with rare blood like yours and escort you..."

"Are you going to hurt me? Are you going to draw out my blood?" Takeuchi Mikiko suddenly quivered.

"No!" Chen Xiaolian immediately shook his head. "It is likely that they only need to use your blood for some experiments. Maybe, there is something within your blood, which could be made into medicines for those monsters. Be at ease, we won't hurt you."

Takeuchi Mikiko looked at him apprehensively. In the end, she shut her mouth and became quiet – it was clear that this girl was still not at ease. However, she also does not have any choice.

Chen Xiaolian assigned Qiao Qiao to look after Takeuchi Mikiko as he went to the front of the bus to discuss the matter with the other members.

"That information regarding her blood should be a very important clue," Nicole was quick to point that out. "I feel that this might be a key point in the second phase of the quest – a pity, if we can find another team that is protecting their quest target and start a conversation with them, we might be able to draw a conclusion. If the person that they must protect also has this rare blood type, then this would become an important piece of information."

"Unfortunately, we cannot determine that. There is no way for us to find the other team's quest target... furthermore, doing so might trigger a conflict with the other teams, resulting in unnecessary losses and casualties," Lun Tai objected immediately.

Nicole suddenly smiled. "Maybe I can conduct a test."

Subsequently, this female Mech pilot produced a syringe and moved towards Takeuchi Mikiko's side. She then extracted a vial of blood from Takeuchi Mikiko. Takeuchi Mikiko showed fear, but was unable to resist. It would appear that the little girl was very fearful of injections and she nearly fainted.

Qiao Qiao then expressed her dissatisfaction towards Nicole's behaviour. "Does everyone from Zero City act in such an overbearing manner, like you?"

"I am just trying to prove something," Nicole answered indifferently.

"I understand, but..." Qiao Qiao narrowed her eyes. "But, this action of yours and those who considers us as a program, those Players who considers us as NPCs, how is it any different? Those Players could casually kill off Awakened ones and NPCs, disregarding us as living beings... but how is this attitude of yours any different from them? How can you simply bully an ordinary person, trample on their dignity and will and enslave her?"

Nicole raised her eyebrows. "What are you trying to say?"

"You mentioned before the incident regarding your father! Your father protected you for more than ten years, all so those Players would not harm you, his little girl! But now? Your father was killed by Players and you are now doing the same thing that the Players do!"

Nicole narrowed her eyes, embers flaring up within them. She said frostily. "Watch your words!"

"Or what? Did I say anything wrong?" Qiao Qiao raised her chin.

"You can say whatever you want, but you are not allowed to bring up my father's name!" Nicole suddenly turned furious. She instantly pulled out her shotgun and aimed it at Qiao Qiao's chest! Qiao Qiao's reaction was in no way behind as she pulled out a PS9, pointing the muzzle at Nicole's head!

1 True story, mates! Supposedly, only 3 in 1,000 people in China have the 'panda blood'.

Chapter 133: Leaving Tokyo

The two females pointed their guns at each other, and the situation turned heated!

“Enough!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted aloud and strode forward to stand between the two girls. He then said seriously. “What are you two arguing about?”

He grabbed the muzzle of Nicole’s shotgun and raised it to point at the roof. Then, he looked at Qiao Qiao. “Qiao Qiao, put away your gun!”

Qiao Qiao took a deep breath. She had a complicated expression on her face; however, she obeyed Chen Xiaolian’s words.

“Hmph! You are a team of kids. I have no expectation for an impartial settlement from this Guild Leader. Besides, I am just a temporary guild member. All I want to say is this: people like you who try to preserve their naïve way of thinking will never get to live a long life! A soft-hearted Guild Leader who is too kind for his own good and a naïve girlfriend... I truly feel sorry for your guild.”

“Enough!” Chen Xiaolian turned his head and stared at Nicole. “A temporary guild member is still a guild member! A temporary Guild Leader is still a Guild Leader! When you are in the Floating Angels Guild, I doubt that you would dare say those words to your Guild Leader.”

“I detest that deep-seated haughtiness of your voice,” Qiao Qiao said coldly. “You may have a powerful strength, a Floating Angel. However, do not forget, you are now a member of our guild. Additionally, you are the one who requested to join us.”

“... you!” Nicole clenched her teeth.

“Break it up, you two!” Chen Xiaolian pointed to the front of the vehicle. “Nicole, go sit in front! Qiao Qiao...” Chen Xiaolian regarded Qiao Qiao with a complex expression. “Follow me to the back. We’ll talk.”

Nicole pursed her lips to the side. She then turned around and moved to the front side of the bus, sitting beside Lun Tai and the rest. After that,

she crossed her arms and looked outside the windows.

Chen Xiaolian pulled Qiao Qiao to the damaged rear part of the vehicle. The outside winds blew in and ruffled Qiao Qiao's long, black hair.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes turned somewhat gentle and his hand reached out for her ruffled hair. He spoke in a low tone of voice. "What is wrong? It is rare for you to lose your temper like this."

"I... am somewhat unable to control my emotions," Qiao Qiao took a deep breath as she closed her eyes before speaking out slowly. "Xiaolian, my heart is in deep turmoil. Even though this is Japan, Tokyo... but, when I see those people commit those lawless actions without any regards to the law, killing wantonly in the streets, they are treating ordinary people as nothing!

"Most importantly, it is not only those Players doing so, even we are doing the same thing.

"My heart feels very confused, I do not know... I can no longer differentiate what is true and what is false.

"That Takeuchi Mikiko... she is just an ordinary girl, an NPC.

"But, sometimes I cannot help myself but wonder: what if that was me?

"If I had not met you and not become the same as you... if I were to remain an ordinary person...

"If this instance dungeon area is not taking place in Tokyo, Japan...

"If this instance dungeon was to occur in the city we live in...

"Then, what would happen to me?

"Would I be running desperately through the streets in panic and fear like everyone else?

"Would I be similar to those ordinary people who were blown up in a disaster or have my house burned down?

"We have seen too many of those occurrences within Tokyo! We have also destroyed many buildings ourselves. What would happen to those

people staying within those buildings? What would happen to those ordinary residents living in the residential districts?

“Could it be that they deserve nothing more but to become lambs to the slaughter?

“Do they only deserve to be an NPC? One that has no rights?

“Do they not deserve any dignity? Being freely dealt with by others, trampled beneath others like ants.

“If we were ordinary people and such a fate befalls us... then, when we gaze upon the Players... the Awakened ones... would we feel angry? Hatred? Despair?

“Xiaolian, my heart is really, really confused.

“Presently, we are the participants of this instance dungeon, fighting against the Players... But, the things that we are doing... how is it any different from the Players? They view our world as a game! Our people as NPC...

“But we... aren't we doing the same thing?

“In the end... is this true or false. Is this actually right or wrong... I, I am suddenly feeling very conflicted. I do not understand... what are we doing all these for. Is it right or is it wrong? I... I...”

Observing Qiao Qiao's agitated eyes, Chen Xiaolian silently took a step forward and pulled Qiao Qiao into his chest. He did so in a domineering manner and he fiercely embraced Qiao Qiao.

His lips kissed down on Qiao Qiao's hair, then down onto Qiao Qiao's forehead. Without waiting for Qiao Qiao to say anything, Chen Xiaolian placed his lips onto hers.

“Wu...”

The girl's eyes first widened before quickly narrowing. Then, she closed her eyes.

Chen Xiaolian kissed Qiao Qiao seriously. Then, his head drew back and he stared solemnly into Qiao Qiao's eyes.

“This is your first participation in an instance dungeon. You will have these chaotic thoughts, you will feel confused, not knowing who you are or what you are doing... you will become confused, tangled and lost... these feelings are normal. It is very, very normal.

“I have also been in your shoes. Back when I was sucked into all this, I too had felt infuriated, confused...

“I too, was unable to differentiate what was truth and what was false...

“Once, I had been feeling even more confused than you

“Do you still remember that night on the rooftop of the hotel?”

“... I remember,” Qiao Qiao’s cheek blushed.

“Back then, I was feeling the same as you are now. Then, I remember a girl using her actions to tell me what is real. She allowed me to, in that moment, taste the ‘truth’,” Chen Xiaolian said and moved closer to Qiao Qiao, pecking gently on her mouth. “Can you feel this ‘truth’ of mine?”

“...” Qiao Qiao used an indescribable expression to gaze at Chen Xiaolian. The feeling of loss and anxiety within her eyes were gone. At that moment, there was only one figure within her beautiful pair of eyes.

“Remember what we agreed on! No matter what... we’ll carry the burden together!”

...

“Your Guild Leader and his little lover are quite the match,” Nicole observed the two of them hugging in the back; she curled the corners of her lips while her eyes revealed her disapproval. “What should I say about this? In such a dangerous instance dungeon, how could they still be in the mood to be romantic?”

Lun Tai suddenly stood up and cast a cold gaze at Nicole. “I think there is something that I need to clear up with you. Miss Nicole! Your Honourable Excellency, Floating Angel!”

“...” Nicole looked at Lun Tai.

“You are indeed an expert from Zero City,” Lun Tai said coolly.

“However, I also really detest that feeling of disdain and superiority that you are giving off! Maybe to you, joining our guild is something disgraceful for someone of your status, causing you to feel dissatisfied... however, I can only tell you this... the door of this vehicle is right there! You may leave any time you like! We will not beg you to join us!”

Gazhi!

The minibus suddenly stopped!

Roddy who was sitting in the driver’s seat, suddenly turned around and regarded Nicole with a calm expression. Looking at this girl he secretly likes... it would be more accurate to say that this was the girl he openly likes, Roddy said earnestly.

“A guild must be united! It must respect the Guild Leader’s will and decisions! If you are determined to look down on us, then there is no need for us to continue working together!

“If you are truly sincere in wanting to become our temporary guild member, then please put aside your feelings of resentment and disdain towards us!

“Please learn to respect your guild mates, even if only temporarily! More importantly, please learn to respect your Guild Leader! Even if he is just a temporary one!

“Right now, this bus is not moving. The door is right there! You can make your choice!”

For these words to come out of Roddy’s mouth, everyone became surprised.

At that moment, the look that Roddy was directing at Nicole contained not the slightest trace of obsession or love, only earnestness and seriousness!

Nicole looked at Roddy with a complicated expression. Then, she abruptly got up and gave a bow to everyone.

“I am very sorry, I am the one who is not thinking properly,” Nicole

slowly said. "I apologize to everyone here! Before the instance dungeon ends, I will respect the principles of this guild, its members and its Guild Leader."

Roddy silently glanced at Nicole before turning back to restart the minibus.

...

Their bus drove through the highway. Geographically speaking, they have already left the Tokyo area.

This detail led to them feeling slightly at ease.

Judging from the details given in the system prompt, the area of effect for the transformation into monsters should be limited to the Tokyo area. As such, by leaving Tokyo, it was possible that they will no longer encounter any danger posed by those transformed into monsters...

As they travelled through the highway, they saw no vehicles at all. That caused everyone on board to feel uneasy.

"Something is not right," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "Logically speaking, since the instance dungeon area is limited to Tokyo City, once we leave and reach the outside world, everything should be normal. How could there be no cars at all on the high way?"

"Maybe the road we are using had been automatically turned into the instance dungeon area," Lun Tai cupped his chin. "This possibility exists. Following the development of the quest and the changes that occur throughout the storyline, the area of the instance dungeon could undergo change as well."

"That is not something we can take lightly," Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

"I believe there should not be any danger for now," Lun Tai thought about it. "The system did not state that the bio-transformation of monsters will occur outside the Tokyo area. Additionally... we should have a huge lead. We should be the first amongst the participants of the second phase to locate the quest target! I can say with certainty that the

other participants must still be inside Tokyo, trying to find the quest target! Finding one person amongst a sea of humanity with just one picture is no easy task.”

“In other words, we will not be attacked for the time being? Be it monsters or other participants, we will not face any dangers from either of them?” Chen Xiaolian breathed a sigh of relief. “I think your analysis makes a lot of sense.”

“Xiaolian, there is a rest stop in front. It would be best for us to stop and refill our gas,” Roddy who was driving shouted out. “We do not have much gas left in this bus. It would be a safe bet to refill some.”

Chen Xiaolian walked to the front and narrowed his eyes to look at the road ahead. A highway rest stop gradually grew closer. It looked very quiet and spacious. There was a resting area and a shopping area in addition to a gas station.

“All right, we’ll head there,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “Everyone be alert, don’t be careless! Have your weapons ready for battle at all times!”

Their bus quickly exited the high way and into the rest stop. They kept moving until they reached the gas station...

The gas station was empty, devoid of cars and staff members!

Everything here... was too quiet.

...

Chapter 134: Loophole

“Stay vigilant!” Chen Xiaolian was the first to jump down the bus, the muzzle of his gun pointing to the front as his waist arced into a forward stooped position and he surveyed the surroundings for a moment. Next, Lun Tai and Bei Tai jumped down. Only after that did the girls came down.

“No one? Strange...” Lun Tai frowned as he looked around. The convenience store and shopping areas were empty, devoid of any signs of life. The empty atmosphere of the rest stop was reminiscent of a scene from a horror movie.

“I keep feeling that something is not right,” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

“Maybe, this is due to the chaotic situation in Tokyo. That is why everyone within this rest stop had run off?” Lun Tai too, was frowning.

“First, refill the gas!” Chen Xiaolian made his decision. “Roddy, you are responsible for refilling the gas. Lun Tai, Bei Tai, you two are responsible for checking out the area.”

“We need some gas for the spare vehicles as well,” Nicole said. “I’ll go find some gas barrels to bring together.”

“Good.”

Chen Xiaolian watched Xia Xiaolei step down from the bus, his face pale to the extreme. The moment he got down the bus, he leaned on the door and started puking.

“What is wrong?”

“Guild Leader, did you forget... I have blood phobia,” Tears and snot flowed out in the vomiting process and Xia Xiaolei’s legs wobbled. “When you all were killing those monsters, I could not do anything at all to help. Watching alone caused my whole body to tremble in fear.”

His face showed guilt. “Am I not very useless?”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He simply patted Xia Xiaolei and laughed. "No, come with me. Help me out with something."

Xia Xiaolei appeared to be feeling better as he followed Chen Xiaolian. His heart was concerned with how insignificant his presence was within the team. During the battle, he was of no help to anyone. He was worth even less than a girl.

Chen Xiaolian understood Xia Xiaolei's feelings and he quickly found something for him to do to make him feel better.

"We are going to the shopping area to see if there is anything we could use," Chen Xiaolian glanced at Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo and Takeuchi Mikiko. "Don't move on your own... you have watched horror movies before, right? In movies, those who move about on their own will face a higher level of danger."

"We know," Qiao Qiao smiled. "I am bringing Soo Soo and Takeuchi Mikiko with me. We won't go alone."

After saying that, the three females moved to the back area of the gas station. Chen Xiaolian did not stop them. It was clear that they were heading toward the washroom.

"Xiaolei, let's head to the shopping area."

Chen Xiaolian patted Xia Xiaolei on his shoulder.

...

The high way rest stop in Japan was not too different compared to those in China, it sported some item and food shops.

Chen Xiaolian also caught sight of a Starbucks outlet. Unfortunately, there were no staff members present and the vast lounge area was empty.

Chen Xiaolian walked to the front of a food vending machine. With what Japanese yen he had left on him, he put them in and bought several sushis. Then, he moved to some other food stores and gathered up some other foods. Xia Xiaolei followed behind him, carrying a basket to hold the items.

On the other side, Lun Tai entered a convenience store, his rifle aiming forward as he entered. After thoroughly searching around, he found nothing of note and was able to relax somewhat. He then retrieved a pack of cigarettes from behind the counter and lit one up for himself. After taking a drag, he sighed. "Japanese cigarettes are too light, it doesn't give any taste at all."

Bei Tai had brought some beers with him.

The two of them then headed out of the convenience store and observed the distant resting area. There, Chen Xiaolian was picking up food from the resting area one by one. They made eye contact and gestured to each other, making a 'safe' signal.

Lun Tai sat on the steps of the convenience store and silently smoked as the sunlight fell on his face.

Beside him, Bei Tai opened up a can of beer and handed it over to him. After drinking in a mouthful, Lun Tai gave a long sigh.

"The weather is pretty good," Lun Tai puffed the cigarette continuously and suddenly let out a bitter laugh. "Even I am feeling somewhat lost now. Two hours ago, we were killing monsters in Tokyo City. Now, we are sitting here, smoking and drinking while sunbathing."

Roddy, who was refuelling the bus far away, caught sight of them smoking. He smiled and moved over. "You guys sure have balls, smoking here? This place is still quite close to the gas station!"

"Do you smoke?" Lun Tai looked at Roddy.

"Give me one," Roddy smiled as he accepted a cigarette from Lun Tai and lit it up himself. "The bus's gas tank is big, refuelling will take some time."

On another side of the gas station, Nicole had found a barrel from an unknown location and was using an automated fuel dispenser to fill the barrel with gas.

The three males sat there as they looked at Nicole. Lun Tai abruptly asked. "Roddy, do you still like that girl?"

Roddy's face appeared slightly awkward. "Err..."

"If you love her, then you love her. There is nothing to be hesitant about," Lun Tai's face was indifferent as he spoke. "For people like us who have been sucked into this world, there is no telling if today is the day we will die in this game. Then... even if we get resurrected after being refreshed, we will still forget everything connected to this game. In fact, it would be no different from dying. Enjoy each day and do not leave any regrets."

"Hmm, but that girl's character is very tough. I fear that you will have to suffer in the future," Bei Tai sniggered.

As he was talking, Nicole turned her head to look at them. Then, she kept the fully filled gas barrel into her storage equipment within the system before slowly walking over. She walked until she was before the three of them. Looking at Lun Tai, she said. "Give me one."

Lun Tai raised an eyebrow and tossed a cigarette to her.

Nicole smiled. She caught it and lit it up with a smooth series of actions.

"You smoke?" Roddy was surprised.

"After getting accustomed to the forest of guns and rain of bullets and the acts of killings, its only natural for me to pick up some habits," Nicole said indifferently. "My father smoked and I like the smell of tobacco."

"Oh, right. Your Floater..." Roddy asked.

"There are three more hours to go before the recharging process ends," Nicole checked the time.

"Could anyone with technological skills use Floater?" Roddy was feeling curious. His skill was 'Mechanical Heart'; thus, he was very interested in this matter. "Acquiring a Floater... is it very difficult?"

"Very difficult," Nicole pondered about it. "Only within some special instance dungeon will you have the chance to acquire it. There is also the Exchange System, where there are some special exchange requirements

for it. Using points alone would not do. There are also some special material procurement and quests that needs to be completed. If you are interested, you can check it through the Exchange System.”

Roddy gave a faint smile. Since he did not have the Exchange System, he could only choose to change the topic. “You are a Mech pilot. So, what kind of Mechs do you normally use in Zero City? You could not possibly be using just the I-Model Sentinel, right?”

“That is a staple model used for the field. Moreover, it is part of the light-type, small-scaled Mech. It will only be used within Zero City. When doing battle on the outside, no one would choose to use it,” Nicole slowly said. “I have my own Mech, a big one. Unfortunately, I did not bring it out with me. It is currently being maintained in the Armament Department belonging to the Security Team. If I had driven that thing out, those people from Thorned Flower Guild would not be able to ambush me.”

Bei Tai tossed a can of beer towards Nicole, who accepted it. She then opened it and took a sip.

Roddy however, shook his head and rejected the beer Bei Tai handed over. “I still need to drive.”

“What are you afraid of? There is no one here to check if you are drunk driving,” Bei Tai smirked.

Roddy shook his head. “It is better for me to be careful. Our quest is critical.”

...

Chen Xiaolian and Xia Xiaolei both held on to a bag full of food each as they walked out of the store. Xia Xiaolei already had a sushi stuffed into his mouth as he chewed with gusto. For the past two days, they have not been able to partake in a decent meal. Yesterday night, they had to make do with bread and biscuits. Now that he was able to stuff himself with the sushi rolls, Xia Xiaolei could not help himself but sigh after he finished chewing the rice. “I feel as though it’s been days since I have eaten anything.”

As he spoke, Xia Xiaolei took the lead while Chen Xiaolian moved behind him. Suddenly, Chen Xiaolian heard a faint sound.

Pa!

It was an extremely fine sound. If one was not listening attentively, they would not have caught it. Chen Xiaolian however, has had his body enhanced. After his physical attributes was enhanced, both his eyes and ears have also become sharper.

The sound had originated from beneath Xia Xiaolei's foot!

"Stop! Don't move!" Chen Xiaolian's face abruptly fell and he held out one hand to press down on Xia Xiaolei's shoulder.

Xia Xiaolei was shocked. "Brother Xiaolian?"

"Don't move! Don't take a step!" Chen Xiaolian's face had turned grim and he quickly bent down to check.

Then, Chen Xiaolian's heart gave a pound!

The floor tile beneath Xia Xiaolei's foot seemed no different from those surrounding it. However, after lightly rapping on it, Chen Xiaolian found that it was issuing a hollow sound.

Cold sweat seeped out from his forehead! Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and said. "Xiaolei, do not move! Please do not move, leave your leg in that spot and do not move it! Slowly lower your body and squat down!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian pulled back his MP5's bolt and he quickly crouched down. His eyes swept the area as fast as lightning and he shouted. "Lun Tai!"

...

The few of them who were seated by the door of the convenience store heard Chen Xiaolian's shout. Noticing something wrong with his tone, they quickly discarded their cigarettes and beer cans, jumping to attention.

"Be vigilant!" Lun Tai quickly howled out and they spread out. Then, they spotted Chen Xiaolian and Xia Xiaolei squatting down before the

doors of the distant resting area. Chen Xiaolian immediately pulled a rest chair that was fixed on the ground, placing it before his body to act as cover.

“You all stay put. Keep an eye on the surroundings! I will go check it out.”

Lun Tai stayed close to the walls and crouched his body as he ran forward. In one breath of time, he managed to reach Chen Xiaolian’s side. He quickly took cover behind one of the store’s cabinets. “What is going on?”

“I do not know if I am mistaken... but Xia Xiaolei may have stepped on something!” Chen Xiaolian said with a solemn tone.

Just then, on the other side of the resting area, Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo and Takeuchi Mikiko moved out of the washroom. Seeing them, Chen Xiaolian quickly shouted out. “Qiao Qiao, get back!”

Qiao Qiao’s face fell immediately. Without saying anything, she used her hands to pull Soo Soo and the Japanese girl back through the door of the washroom. She then held onto her gun and peeked out half her head. “What is going on?”

“Get back! Do not come out!” Chen Xiaolian snapped.

Lun Tai produced a dagger as he crouched down by Xia Xiaolei’s foot. Carefully and slowly, he cut open the edge of the tile, creating a small hole through it. After taking a look through the hole, Lun Tai’s expression turned ugly.

“Son of a bitch! Someone set up a trap! This is an anti-infantry mine! It is pressure sensitive! Someone dug out the bottom area of this tile and set up this mine below before covering it with the tile. Appearance wise, it seemed normal. But, once you step on it...” As he spoke, Lun Tai raised his head to see the pale-faced Xia Xiaolei. “Buddy, don’t panic. Don’t move about carelessly. I will try to disable it.”

“En!” Xia Xiaolei nodded his head vigorously. It was clear that he was feeling afraid, but he only bit down hard on his teeth.

Chen Xiaolian's face was distorted as he carefully searched around. However, his eyes could see nothing out of the ordinary.

The distant Bei Tai, Nicole and Roddy had also gestured to them, indicating that they did not find anything wrong. Chen Xiaolian quickly made a gesture and soon, Bei Tai and Nicole dispersed, moving out in two different directions as they continued searching.

A few moments later, the two of them ran back from the two sides of the rest stop. They shook their heads, nothing was found.

Chen Xiaolian became puzzled.

At that moment, Lun Tai had already cut out the floor tile with his dagger, leaving only the small piece of pressure sensor.

Lun Tai examined the mine and hissed. He then forced out a smile. "Disabling it will be troublesome... why don't we ask Roddy to come over. Doesn't he have the ability to control machinery?"

"Roddy!" Chen Xiaolian shouted.

Arching his waist and stooping forward, Roddy ran over. As he approached, he threw himself on the ground. "What's up?"

"Look!" Chen Xiaolian pointed at Xia Xiaolei's feet.

Roddy glanced at it and his face distorted. "Someone planted a trap? But, we have checked everywhere. There is no one here."

"First, disable this thing!" Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. "However, disabling it would be too risky. Try using your ability."

Roddy extended two fingers to touch the mine. A few seconds later, he raised his head to look at Xia Xiaolei. "There is a method."

"What do you mean?"

"There is a pressure sensor inside. If you loosen your feet and the pressure dissipates, it will explode. However, I can control it and delay it for several seconds. Lun Tai, help me out. Find something heavy and bring it over. Later, when I say let go, Xia Xiaolei, you must let go! Then, Lun Tai, you must quickly put that heavy item on it as replacement!"

Lun Tai checked his surroundings before pulling out a beer keg from a nearby container. “We can use this. Let’s do this!”

“I will count to three. Xiaolei, do not panic. Relax, I can delay this thing for quite some time, even ten seconds would not be a problem. However, it is better to be safe. You had better move quickly,” Roddy deliberately smiled to comfort Xia Xiaolei.

“Just count, brother! Let’s do this fast, my legs are going numb.”

“One, two... THREE!”

Xiaolei quickly pulled back his leg while Chen Xiaolian behind him quickly pulled him back by two steps. At the same time, Lun Tai immediately used a beer keg to press down on it.

“Done!”

Roddy breathed a sigh of relief as he determined that the pressure sensor’s detonation sequence was not triggered.

“It’s best if we do not move about recklessly!” Lun Tai’s face sank. “Hell knows if the other tiles may have mines below them! Son of a bitch! Who is trying to set us up? How is it even possible? How could there be other participants before us? We should be the first to find the quest target for protection!”

At that instant, a sharp scream suddenly rang out from the washroom far away!

“AHH!”

...

“It’s the voice of the Japanese girl?” Roddy was quick to speak out.

Chen Xiaolian’s response was the fastest. He ignore all else and charged forward with a stooping forward posture. Lun Tai who was behind him shouted out, but he ignored it. Chen Xiaolian stayed close to the wall as he ran toward the washroom.

Behind the sign placed on the washroom were two doors. The left was for males while the right was for females.

Chen Xiaolian burst into the female washroom and saw that Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo were standing there in perfect condition. His heart gave a sigh of relief. Then, he saw Takeuchi Mikiko crouching before a toilet cubicle, her face revealing terror and she screamed sharply. As for Qiao Qiao, she was trying to comfort her.

“What happened?” Chen Xiaolian quickly moved over.

“Look!” Qiao Qiao pointed at the innermost cubicle. Its door was left open.

...

Within the toilet cubicle was a corpse.

More accurately, it was half a corpse!

It was a woman, not too old judging from her remaining upper body, which was wearing a protective vest. Clearly, she was a participant of this game. However, it was unknown if she was a Player or an Awakened.

Her upper body remained intact. However, from her abdomen downward... the rest of her body had disappeared!

The area below the waist appeared to have been dissolved by something and the disconnected part was not a bloody sight that he had imagined. The disconnected part resembled the after effects of being burned by intense temperature, and have melded together. Looking at it now, the part looked like a piece of hard plastic.

Next to her body was a weapon, a dogleg knife. Judging from the surface of the weapon, it appeared to be quite a good weapon. Chen Xiaolian stepped inside and picked up the weapon. Examining it, he found it to be a [B] Class weapon. He then threw it toward Qiao Qiao. “Take it.”

The corpse was too strange.

After examining it for a moment, Chen Xiaolian was still unable to find any clues. He then closed the door.

“What happened?” Chen Xiaolian asked Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao exhaled and fought back the urge to vomit. Then, she replied.

“Earlier when we entered this washroom, we did not realize this... this was the innermost cubicle. So, we did not discover it back when we first entered. Back then, you told us to go back. Takeuchi Mikiko retreated to the innermost side and unwittingly opened the door to discover that.”

“Nothing else happened? Did you see anything else?”

“No,” Qiao Qiao shook her head with certainty.

The washroom was a closed off area without any windows. There was only the window and a very small ventilation duct above their heads.

Chen Xiaolian’s face suddenly tensed as he stared at the ventilation duct. He signalled to Qiao Qiao and she too, tensed up. Without making any noise, she led Takeuchi Mikiko toward the door while holding onto Soo Soo as they retreated.

Chen Xiaolian pulled the bolt of his gun and pointed the muzzle at the ventilation duct up above. At the same time, his other hand summoned out Bone Crusher Axe. Taking a deep breath, he shouted out. “Come out!”

Nothing happened.

Chen Xiaolian sneered. He raised Bone Crusher Axe and hacked down heavily onto the ventilation up above!

With a “ka”, a hole appeared on the ceiling.

At the same time, a gasp came from within the ventilation duct!

“If you still do not come out, I will open fire!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted and he signalled to Qiao Qiao with his eyes. Qiao Qiao then raised her gun at the ventilation duct.

“I will count to three! One! Two!”

“Don’t! Don’t shoot! I am coming out!” A weak sound came from above.

...

The grille of the duct was opened and a slender arm emerged. Next, part of a thin body emerged.

It was a girl. More accurately, it was a rather young girl, whose age was

probably the same as Takeuchi Mikiko.

Young and wearing a vest-type of protective suit. One look was enough to tell that it was a low-class item. Both her hands were not holding onto any weapons. When she jumped down from above and stood up, Chen Xiaolian was somewhat shocked.

This girl was very short and thin, shorter than Chen Xiaolian by a head. Only someone with such a small body would be able to crawl into the ventilations ducts.

Despite her tender age, her head was left bald and her nose was wearing a nose ring. On the exposed part of her neck was a fire shaped tattoo. Thick smoky makeup was applied on to both her eyes. However, it seemed that she had been crying and her makeup had become indistinct.

Just by looking at her, he got the impression that she was one of those female ruffians. After she fell to the ground, she obediently raised up her hands, her face displaying fear.

“Don’t move about!” Chen Xiaolian did not take her lightly due to her looks and age. Instead, his gun remained locked onto the girl’s head. “Walk over here on your own! I want to see your hands at all times!”

The bald girl did not do anything that was out of line and she cautiously walked forward. Then, she knelt down on her own initiative, placing both hands on her head.

Qiao Qiao did not move out to search her – for participants, be it Players or Awakened ones, they could keep their weapons inside the system.

However, Chen Xiaolian retrieved a pair of handcuffs from his pocket – it was among the items that Nicole had robbed from the squad of Special Assault Team.

After handcuffing the bald girl did Chen Xiaolian direct the muzzle of his gun down the ground. However, his gaze never left the girl’s hands. “Get out! You go first!”

“No... outside, outside is too dangerous!” The bald girl’s voice was very

childlike.

“Get out!” Chen Xiaolian showed no mercy. At this point in time, he would never show any mercy. Xia Xiaolei had nearly been blown to death by the mine! If he had not heard the sound earlier, Xia Xiaolei would certainly have died. As for him, he had been standing so close to Xia Xiaolei that he would likely have suffered the same fate.

“I beg you! Don’t go out! There is a monster outside! A terrifying monster!” The bald girl cried imploringly.

“... .. monster?”

...

Two minutes later, Chen Xiaolian marched the bald girl toward the outer part of the resting area. There was a manager’s office there. Chen Xiaolian slammed open the door and all of them headed inside.

“Now, tell us everything regarding your situation,” Chen Xiaolian said coldly. “If you are smart, then don’t try to lie.”

“... I won’t lie,” The bald girl’s eyes showed a deep level of fear.

“Your identity? Awakened? Player?”

“I...” The bald girl’s eyes showed hesitation. She looked at Chen Xiaolian before finally making up her mind. She sighed. “I am an Awakened! If you are Players... then just kill me.”

“Awakened?” Chen Xiaolian looked at the others. They too, expressed surprise.

“Yes. I am just an insignificant small fry. This is my second instance dungeon,” The bald girl sobbed. “I am scared, I am really scared.”

“What is the name of your guild?” Lun Tai asked dispassionately.

“I... I do not have a guild. Ah, no, I have a guild!”

“Do you have or do you not?!”

“... originally, I did not. In this instance dungeon though, I joined a guild.”

However, the girl's next answer caused everyone to become surprised!

The girl's name was Nagase Komi, from Kansai, Japan, 15 years old. Two months prior, in an activity organized by her school, she was sucked into a strange incident (instance dungeon). Back then, everyone died, leaving her who became an Awakened.

In that instance dungeon, she was fortunate enough to survive and leave the instance dungeon as an Awakened. Then, she found that her dead schoolmates had been resurrected. She then spent the following period of time feeling lost and fearful.

This time, the system had selected her to be a solo participant in this instance dungeon.

Strength wise, this Nagase Komi was so weak, it caused them to feel shocked. She possessed a personal skill of invisibility. However, this skill's class was too low and could only make her invisible for less than one minute.

This ability was quite good. Unfortunately, this girl does not possess any battle skills and battle strength. The attributes of her original body was also not high. Even with her invisibility, her battle strength was of not much use within the instance dungeon.

Within these two months' time, the only benefit that the invisibility skill brought for her was the opportunity for her to steal some money and belongings.

Indeed, this girl known as Nagase Komi was a standard Japanese bad girl.

Participating in this Tokyo instance dungeon with her strength, a rookie like her would never be able to make it through the first phase. If she was not killed, she would likely have failed the quest and be sent out.

After all, to snatch someone else's energy source and gather up five of those energy sources was not something that someone with her abilities could do.

However... she miraculously made it to the second phase!

This detail caused everyone in Meteor Rock Guild to feel rather surprised.

After Nagase Komi told them the method she used, everyone was left speechless!

Within the first phase of the Tokyo instance dungeon, Nagase Komi encountered a mysterious stranger who was also a game participant.

The other party was a middle-aged man who introduced himself as Culkin.

This Culkin successfully executed a marvellous matter. He found and gathered solo participants who were not part of any guilds. Then, he gathered them all, and established a guild! Then... they completed the first phase of the quest!

...

“All of us would be assigned an energy source by the system in the first phase of the quest. Thus... as long as five solo participants come together, they could gather up five energy sources. Culkin told us that there was no need for us to kill each other or snatch from others. We only needed to do one thing, and that is to establish a guild.”

Listening to Nagase Komi's words, everyone from Meteor Rock Guild was left speechless!

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned. Then, he let out a grudging laugh and lightly slapped his own forehead.

“Son of a bitch! This method... why didn't I think of it?”

Nicole, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were staring with widened eyes.

Roddy looked at the bald girl and murmured. “So... you people did not even go killing about. Instead, you gathered up a group of solo participants, created a guild and just waltzed your way through the first phase?”

“Yes,” Nagase Komi thought about it and said. “Culkin found a place, a remote and safe hotel for us to gather inside. We gathered up to twenty

people and made a guild. That way, the energy sources we had also became significant.”

“Twenty energy sources?” Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

That worked?

“No... actually, it became much less later on,” Nagase Komi whispered. “There were other participant teams who found us and they tried to snatch our energy sources. However, Culkin was very smart. He was able to negotiate with the other parties. If the opposing team has only a few members, the sight of twenty people on our side and their lack of knowledge about our abilities led to their reluctance to engage us recklessly. Most of them would choose to retreat in fear. If we meet a stronger team, Culkin would step out to negotiate with the other team. He was willing to give the other team an energy source, in exchange for peace. Generally, when the other team saw that we have twenty people, whose abilities and number of experts on our side was unknown to them, they would not choose a hard approach. For them to be able to negotiate peacefully without resorting to violence and get an energy source, they would usually choose to retreat peacefully.

“Thus, under Culkin’s leadership, we were able to complete the first phase.”

Chen Xiaolian gave a grudging smile and kneaded his face. “I have always thought of myself as a very smart person. Now that I hear about this, I am simply an idiot... fine! What next? After the first phase ended, what did you do?”

“For the second phase, our guild received a quest from the system, where it gave us a picture. We are to find a person within Tokyo and escort that person to a designated location. The destination is in Saitama Prefecture.

“Culkin said that there was no need for so many people to go together in order to find that person. Thus, he decided to split up. He brought several of the strongest ones with him to the Metropolitan Police Department. That place holds a large database, which could be used to

search for information regarding the Tokyo population.

“As for the other group, Culkin assigned us a mission. We are to move toward the designated location and set up traps at a certain spot in the middle of the way. This is to entrap other teams, which might be heading for the designated location.

“According to Culkin, this is for the sake of giving our team more time and at the same time, chances. We might come across an opportunity to rob other teams. He said that others would certainly plan to find their quest target first before leaving Tokyo area, heading to Saitama Prefecture.

“He said that we will do the opposite. First, we will separate our forces, moving out of Tokyo and set up traps halfway through. There is a great chance that we could take the initiative by doing so. At the same time, we might also be able to kill off one or two of the other teams, and get some loot while we are at it.”

“Did no one object this decision?” The corners of Chen Xiaolian’s mouth smiled in a peculiar manner.

“No one objected... at least not on the surface. Culkin’s strength is much stronger than us. Additionally, he was the one who led us to complete the first phase of the quest. Thus, his authority had risen high and everyone was willing to obey his command. Besides, he also said that this guild of ours will be maintained in the future. In this game, unity is the only way to survive. Those who go at it alone will face a great deal of difficulty.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded.

He could not help himself and sighed out inwardly.

That Culkin... is a powerful character!

In the first phase, he drilled a loophole through the system, a beautifully drilled hole!

In the second phase, he was clearly being ruthless!

What divide our forces to leave Tokyo... to take the initiative... entrap

other teams halfway through... catching others by surprise...

All those reasoning are but a pack lies.

From what Chen Xiaolian could see, that Culkin fellow was purging the guild!

He had the experts of the guild stay with him to find the quest target in the Metropolitan Police Department. Then, he tossed out those with less strength out... to become cannon fodders!

Lie here in ambush? Ambush the other teams with this bunch of feeble chickens?

Just think about it, for a team to be able to complete the first and second phase of the quest and escort the quest target until this location, that team would certainly have a considerable level of strength!

A rabble consisting of rookies and solo participants wants to ambush others here?

Forget it!

Thus, Culkin's real objectives for sending these people here can be divided into two:

First, to purge the guild! Purge out those with questionable strength from the guild, leaving only those elites with enough strength to gain his approval.

Second, by tossing away these cannon fodders to set up traps halfway through, it might actually be possible to delay the other teams – even if it was only one hour's worth of delay, even if they only managed to damage the other teams, it would still be beneficial to Culkin! After all, these people were nothing more than cannon fodders!

This fellow... not only is he smart, he is also ruthless!

In the roomful of people, Chen Xiaolian's thoughts had also occurred to the veteran, Lun Tai. Nicole's face turned grim while Qiao Qiao and Roddy pondered about it for a moment before understanding the main points. They could not restrain themselves as they directed gazes of pity

at Nagase Komi – this girl was simply used as a cannon fodder.

“You are the ones who set up the mine?” Chen Xiaolian asked coldly.

“Yes,” Nagase Komi quickly answered. “But, right after we began setting up the mines, something unexpected happened!”

“Unexpected? You mean the monster? Back then, you said that there is a monster out here. What happened?”

“There really is a monster!” Nagase Komi’s body suddenly trembled and she quickly uttered out. “I am not lying! After arriving at this rest stop, we found that this place was empty. In the beginning, none of us thought too much about it. Since we did not find anything after searching around, we began to prepare in order to set up an ambush. But, before we could actually begin, a problem arose.”

After saying that, Nagase Komi’s face gradually turned distorted. “We stopped our car in the parking lot behind. Someone then suggested setting up a sniper position. They believed that the big tree opposite the highway was not bad for that purpose. So, two people left the rest stop with the intention of heading across the highway and into the opposite side.

“It was then that the tragedy occurred. As the two of them were attempting to leave the rest stop, a monster suddenly appeared!”

Leave the rest stop? The monster appeared?

Everyone’s face fell and Chen Xiaolian quickly asked. “What kind of monster is it?”

“Very, very, very big! It is just like the monsters from those horror movies,” Nagase Komi suddenly cried out. “I beg you, please do not kill me! I beg you! I only want to hide, I do not want to be killed by the monsters! I do not intend to harm you all! I’ll surrender, all right?”

“Don’t cry! Explain everything first!” Chen Xiaolian shouted.

However, Nagase Komi appeared to have lost control of herself. She only cried and her words were uttered intermittently. She kept muttering the same words “do not kill me” and those of the similar meaning.

...

A very big monster?

Chen Xiaolian turned to the others.

“Regardless if what she said is the truth or not, it would be best for us to leave here instantly.”

Nicole’s proposal quickly gained Chen Xiaolian’s support. The others also did not object.

They then walked out of their room to the outer area. Looking around, they saw that there was nothing out of the ordinary. The bright sunlight descended down and, with the exception of the place being much quieter, there was nothing of note.

However, Nagase Komi suddenly became agitated – as they were marching her up the bus, the girl suddenly struggled madly with everything she had and cried!

“We cannot leave! We cannot try to leave this rest stop! As soon as we try to leave, the monster will attack! We cannot get up the vehicle! No! No! NOO!”

Bei Tai turned irritable. He walked over and slapped her head angrily. “What are you shouting about?”

“Wait!” Chen Xiaolian looked at Nagase Komi’s mad appearance; it seemed to be one of pure terror, and not an act. A thought came to him. “Everyone, be alert! Ready your weapons and be prepared to engage in battle at any moment.”

They started the bus with Roddy as the driver. Beside Roddy, Lun Tai was carrying his rifle as he peered ahead anxiously.

In the bus, the two Japanese girls were thrown into the central area while the team members were scattered around, their weapons completely loaded as they too, looked around nervously.

Their vehicle drove out of the gas station and slowly moved to the road heading out of the rest stop. They were about to drive out of the rest stop

and onto the road leading out of the stop...

When...

BOOM!

A loud sound rang out!

The front of the bus appeared to have slammed heavily into an invisible wall!

The windshield of the bus suddenly cracked!

Roddy's figure who was seated in the driver's seat lurched before tilting over, his head falling down to the side. Lun Tai quickly held him up.

They saw that the front area of the bus had become deformed and had been halted at the exit point of the rest stop. Before the bus, the air itself seemed to be moving. It was as though there was an invisible wall before them... however, no matter how they strained their eyes, they were unable to see anything.

"Something's not right! Look!"

Chen Xiaolian's face suddenly contorted!

Several broken fragments from the bus was floating in the middle of the air as it moved slowly before the bus... it was moving in the air!

The instant he noticed that, Chen Xiaolian reacted.

"There is something! It is moving! It is just in front of us! Bloody Hell! It is invisible!"

Boom!

Another loud sound rang out!

It was as though an invisible force had slammed violently into the bus, throwing the bus into the air! It was thrown off by 5 to 6 metres. As it landed, it toppled over twice!

The bus was deformed and the windows were shattered. The people within it fell.

“Hurry up and get out of the bus!” Chen Xiaolian crawled up. He grabbed someone who was beside him and tossed that person out without even checking who it was.

Soo Soo was thrown out, followed by Takeuchi Mikiko. Then, it was Nagase Komi.

The other team members had already made their move. At that moment, Qiao Qiao had already crawled out from the other side of the bus. Roddy, whose entire head was dripping with blood, was being pulled out by his hair by Nicole as she charged out through the hole in the shattered windshield.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai had also rushed out. Finally, the last to run out were Chen Xiaolian and Xia Xiaolei.

Chen Xiaolian kicked Xia Xiaolei out before jumping out through a window...

Just as his body hit the ground, he heard a loud explosion!

The bus once again flew up into the air as it whirled around! Whirling twice, the bus then flew a distance of tens of metres away!

The bus then smashed into the gas station, directly into the gas pump...

“Oh Hell! It’s going to blow!” Chen Xiaolian watched as the gas pump was smashed into, and gas sprayed out from the tubes while sparks flew. All he could do was shout out and run toward the back room of the resting area while grabbing the one beside him, ignoring all else.

The moment the bus collided into the gas station... following the falling sparks, flames spread out instantaneously!

The gas flowing out from the gas tubes spread across the ground and was quickly lit on fire!

The flames spread out rapidly even as Chen Xiaolian ran frantically. He held onto two person, Takeuchi Mikiko on his left and Soo Soo on his right. As he was dashing madly, he heard a terrifyingly loud sound coming from behind him!

Orange flames soared to the skies and the resulting shockwave blasted the ceiling of the gas station off.

Orange coloured flames rose up by over tens of metres! The gas burst out even as it caught on fire!

The doors and windows of the rooms and buildings beside the gas station were immediately shattered by the shockwave before being engulfed by the flames!

Chen Xiaolian could feel the heat wave charging forth from behind him as the intense shockwave seemingly pushed his body forward. Although he was already running forward, this action only managed to mitigate part of the incoming force and his body was forcibly propelled several metres up into the skies! Chen Xiaolian fell into the rest stop's shopping area. After falling, he only had enough time to push down the two girls onto the ground so that they do not raise their heads...

The shockwave spread out and the windows of the surrounding buildings were blown into smithereens!

The scattering of the heat wave was over!

At that moment, everyone from the Meteor Rock Guild had charged into the shopping area, each of them crawling on the ground in varying postures.

After the heat had receded somewhat, they raised their heads and were shocked beyond belief!

They... could finally 'see' the monster!

The monster was originally invisible. However, after the explosion occurred, the resulting flames and gas that was sprayed out had partially adhered to its body. The sparks and flames, in addition to the many fragments and dusts...

Amidst these visible objects, the invisible monster's outline could vaguely be discerned.

It appeared to be a...

It has a height of over 10 metres! Nearly three storeys high! It possessed a high number of claw shaped legs, as though it was a multi-legged monster.

No! It would be more accurate to say that it was not a monster... but... a giant insect?!

The gas that was stuck to its body burned, but it did not cause any damage to it! In addition... its body was very long! The shape of its body was somewhat similar to a snake's. Its long body was stretched out, seemingly encircling the entire highway rest stop!

“Oh... son of a Hellish bitch! What the Hell is that thing?” Roddy cursed out.

...

——

Nagase Komi, raw: ‘长瀬幸未’, pinyin: ‘zhāng lài xìng wèi’.

Culkin, raw: ‘卡尔金’, pinyin: ‘kǎ’ěr jīn’.

Chapter 135: Come Out! Bai Qi!

“What are you standing there for? Fire!” Lun Tai roared furiously.

He raised his weapon and opened fire, the Howa 89 assault rifle shooting out bullets. However, the bullets that struck the now partially invisible and monstrous body only managed to create sparks!

“Ordinary firearms is useless! Bloody Hell!” Chen Xiaolian howled loudly. “Nicole! Use the grenade launcher!”

Nicole was prepared. She set up a Japanese grenade launcher...

BANG!

After a loud explosion, a clump of smoke filled the air. However, the invisible body was still moving about in the air, not exhibiting the signs of any damage!

“Hurry up and retreat! It is coming!” Chen Xiaolian shouted as he directed the others to move toward the shopping area of the rest stop.

Then, the gigantic insect chose not to charge inside as they had anticipated. Instead, whirling fleshy holes suddenly appeared on its invisible body...

Pu pu pu

Several black coloured objects were ejected out!

After falling onto the ground, each of those objects took the shape of a terrifying and disgusting monster.

A tipped mouth with fangs and a body that was covered with a hard shell. It's mouth part was very big and its body was roughly 2 metres in length! Its hind legs were set to crawl while its front legs were shaped like sickles. It appeared like a...

A humanoid bipedal beetle?!

“Damn it! This thing can also lay grubs?” Roddy lost his composure.

“Hit the small ones first! Everyone retreat! Open fire as you retreat!

Maintain your fire!" Lun Tai said.

Chen Xiaolian quickly said. "Qiao Qiao, run inside and see if there is any other way out!"

After saying that, he saw that a monster was charging at him. Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. "Garfield! Come out!"

With a roar, three Garfields appeared before Chen Xiaolian! They roared in unison as they charged the monster before Chen Xiaolian.

The three Garfields attacked with lightning like speed! Their swiped with their claws and bit with their fangs rapidly. In the blink of an eye, Garfield had thrown a beetle monster down the ground. At the same time, the two Garfields on the left and right each bit down on one each and tore them apart, killing them!

A "chi" sound ripped the air and the beetle monster was torn into two by Garfield! A green, oily and viscous liquid sprayed out, causing a pungent stench to waft through the air.

Noticing the smell, Chen Xiaolian felt a sense of foreboding!

This pungent smell...

"Bloody Hell! What a strong smell of gasoline! This thing... it..."

A beetle monster abruptly opened its mouth and sprayed out a stream of flames, which swept toward Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian leapt to the left side and a shelf behind him was engulfed in flames!

It was then that those whirring, fleshy holes reappeared in the middle of the air outside.

Pu pu pu...

More of those beetle monsters were created. After they fell onto the ground, they pounced toward the stores!

"Son of a bitch! What in the world is that thing? How could there be so many bugs?"

Some distance away, Lun Tai's roar came over even as the assault rifle in his hand constantly produced the sounds of "tat tat tat tat tat".

At the same moment, Roddy howled out. He held onto a riot shield and charged in under the flames and dodged one of the monster's attack. He did not use a gun, but instead brandished a sword, hacking down onto one of the beetle monster's head, splitting it in half!

"Roddy! Don't stand on their body liquid! That thing is like gasoline, it's flammable!" Chen Xiaolian called out.

Lun Tai stuck his head out from behind a shelf and suddenly caught sight of a beer keg on the left side of the entrance – it was the keg that was pressing down on the mine.

An idea flashed through Lun Tai's mind, then he showed no hesitation as he raised his rifle and unleashed a hail of bullets at the beer keg.

The beer keg shuddered from the bullet strikes and beer flowed out from the holes created on its surface. The beer keg gradually became lighter and soon, it tilted over...

"Get down!" Lun Tai bellowed.

BOOM!

Following the sound of a loud explosion caused by the detonated mine, the entrance gates to the shopping area collapsed, bringing the walls down with it! Suddenly, the entrance to the shopping area was blocked!

"Retreat! Everyone retreat!" Chen Xiaolian yelled. "Roddy, bring Xia Xiaolei to the back! Bei Tai, watch the quest target! Lun Tai, you and I will guard the rear!"

Lun Tai had already activated his skill.

The muscles of his entire body swelled up. After triggering this skill of the Body Technique Division, his originally lean body abruptly swelled into a bear like warrior. His sleeves were torn apart and only the protective vest remained on his body.

Lun Tai roared out and sent a fist through a fire emergency cabinet. He

grabbed the fire axe there and rushed out, hacking the beetle monster before him before delivering a ruthless kick!

Chen Xiaolian had also brought out Bone Crusher Axe, going head on with the monsters and displaying the Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes. He cleaved apart all the remaining beetle monsters within the hall and then called out to Lun Tai. "Let's go go go!"

Lun Tai roared out several times and produced two hand grenades, which he threw at the walls of the entrance. Then, he turned around and followed Chen Xiaolian as they ran into the inner area of the shopping area.

After rounding a corner, the two of them plastered themselves on the wall and heard the sounds of explosions rumbling out. The explosion from the hand grenade caused even the ceiling of the hall to collapse down.

"That should last for a few minutes, right?" Chen Xiaolian gasped for breath and he glanced at the outer area. Smoke filled the air and the entrance to the shopping area was thoroughly blocked.

Lun Tai stood up and ran to the side. He roared out and pushed forward a row of containers, which he used to press onto the pile of debris. Then, he turned around and said. "It won't last! Find an exit from the back!"

When Chen Xiaolian and Lun Tai ran to the inner area of the shopping area to meet up with the other team members, they found Qiao Qiao shouting to them from some distance away. "Hurry over! We can break out through the back!"

Nicole had already taken out an SUV from her storage equipment. The SUV was placed within the hall of the shopping area, and she shouted out. "Everyone is already inside!"

Roddy had already climbed onto the driver's seat. With his Mechanical Heart skill, it would be more convenient for him to control the SUV.

The SUV was a seven-seater, and when they all entered, it felt rather cramped. At a time like this however, they were unable to be picky.

Roddy stamped onto the throttle and the SUV roared to life, charging out like a beast.

The SUV sped through the halls of the shopping area, smashing its way through two rows of seats and into a teppanyaki store. They smashed their way through its walls and charged outside the shopping area!

“In front, in front!” Nicole who sat in the first passenger’s seat cried out. Through the windshield, she could see explosion residue floating in the air before them. Clearly, the invisible monster was blocking their path.

Roddy quickly turned the steering wheel and the SUV made a rapid turn in another direction while it sped. The momentum caused Nicole to fall into Roddy’s chest.

“Your left!” Chen Xiaolian pulled the handle as he cried out. Roddy replied. “I know!”

Their SUV circled around the highway rest stop. Despite driving quickly, they found that they were trapped inside.

Nicole got up from Roddy’s chest and glanced at Roddy. She did not say anything. Instead, she pulled down the windows, aimed her gun outside, and pulled the trigger.

Tat tat tat tat tat...

The bullets created minor ripples in the air; clearly, it had struck something invisible. As their SUV moved in a circle, the ripples too appeared in a circle.

Finally...

“There is a gap here!”

As they were moving through the northeast corner of the rest stop, the bullets she shot out pierced through!

“Charge out!”

Roddy heard Nicole’s shout and he quickly accelerated the speed of the SUV!

Bweng!

The SUV lurched, as its wheels seemed to have rolled over something unknown, causing the SUV to soar upward, travel through the air for over 10 metres and finally made it out of the rest stop! They then charged into the wilderness!

The wilderness area was a vast expanse of wheat fields. The SUV moved bumpily, up and down through the fields, tilting about as they moved forward.

Seeing that they were finally able to escape from the rest stop, everyone in the SUV exclaimed out joyfully.

Then, Chen Xiaolian crawled to the back of their vehicle and glanced at the back. His face fell. "It's too early to be happy! That thing is chasing after us!"

Looking at the fields of wheat behind them, they suddenly saw large tracts of wheat falling down. It was as though something invisible was trampling its way forward. In addition, its speed was incredibly fast! It was even faster than the SUV!

"Damn it! Roddy, open the trunk!"

Lun Tai roared. Then, seeing the trunk opened, he rapidly pulled out several hand grenades. In one breath, he bit out all the rings and tossed them out!

The sound of explosions reverberated continuously from the wheat field behind them as the grenades detonated. Flames rose to the skies!

Countless wheat tassels danced in the air and covered the monster's body. Finally, an outline slowly formed.

The monster remained unharmed. However, its body was gradually revealed!

It was a long insect with short limbs! It was nearly 3 metres in height with a very long body!

Beneath the huge body were countless short limbs moving rapidly,

resembling...

That thing simply resembled a madly galloping train!

“Roddy! Go faster!” Chen Xiaolian saw that it was getting closer and he shouted to Roddy.

Roddy cursed out. “This is already the max! Son of a bitch! This Japanese vehicle just won’t cut it. Its speed is just too low! Also, we are currently on the wheat fields, we cannot go too fast! Hold on tight! I will charge into the highway! Hold on tight!”

With a “weng”, the SUV tilted as it slammed through a fence, breaking it and charging into the highway. The resulting friction caused a vast amount of sparks to fly out and the SUV’s body was covered in sharp scratches!

After the SUV’s wheels sped through the highway, its speed was instantly raised by a notch!

However, that train like giant millipede monster also charged up the highway. Moreover... its running speed appeared to have increased!

“Holy shit!” Chen Xiaolian cursed out. “This bugger is too resilient! How do we break through?”

“We cannot escape! It is too fast!” Lun Tai howled and he frantically poured out a barrage of bullets out toward the back.

Everyone in the vehicle was opening fire. Despite knowing that it could do no harm to this monster, their bullets sailed backward, causing the sounds of “ding ding dang dang” to resonate out.

Nicole had already launched out the last two grenades. However, after they exploded, she found that it was in vain. The monster’s form became more visible, but it was apparent that no damage was done!

Chen Xiaolian suddenly thought of an idea. “Nicole! You still have a spare vehicle, right?”

“Yes! Why?”

“Listen to me count. I will count to three, then, you bring out the spare

vehicle and place it behind us! I will count to three! Get it?"

"What?"

"There is no time to explain! Follow my orders!" Chen Xiaolian shouted. "Lun Tai! Do you still have any hand grenades?"

"The last five!"

"Good! Give me all of it!" Chen Xiaolian roared and accepted the last string of hand grenades from Lun Tai. "Everyone hold on tight!"

"Xiaolian, what are you thinking of doing?" Qiao Qiao stared at Chen Xiaolian.

"Follow my orders!" Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and spoke out grimly. "Roddy, maintain the speed! No matter what happen, do not stop. Keep moving forward! I will stay behind to buy time!"

"... what? NO!" Roddy and Qiao Qiao shouted out at the same time. Soo Soo as well, was tightly gripping Chen Xiaolian's hand. "Oppa!"

"There is no time to explain! I have a method to escape! Trust me! Roddy! Whether or not this car filled with people could survive would depend on you! No matter what, do not stop!" Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth. "Nicole! Now! One, two, THREE! Release the vehicle!"

Nicole immediately obeyed. Following a beam of light, an SUV appeared on the road behind their vehicle. Chen Xiaolian shook off Soo Soo's hand and abruptly sprang out of his seat. He sprang out from the trunk and out of their vehicle!

"Xiaolian!"

Roddy subconsciously braked, but Nicole grabbed onto his shoulder. "Keep moving forward! Listen to your Guild Leader's orders!"

"Damn it!" Roddy's eyes turned red!

Through the rear view mirror, he saw Chen Xiaolian jump out of their vehicle through the open trunk to land atop the spare SUV behind them. Chen Xiaolian then stumbled down from the SUV and rolled down the ground a few times before hitting the guardrail beside the highway...

...

Chen Xiaolian felt pain searing through his arms. Although his body had been enhanced, this level of impact had still damaged him. His sleeves were torn to shreds and blood trickled down his arms and legs.

Forcing himself up, he saw the train like monster dashing forward!

The spare SUV in the middle of the road, which was blocking the way was crashed into by the monster!

Then...

In the frontal area of the monster, a huge hole abruptly appeared!

It was the monster's mouth! A dense line of serrated fangs filled the interior of its mouth; at least twelve rows could be seen.

The SUV was directly swallowed up by the monster!

Most of the SUV's body was swallowed in and it was quickly crushed by the monster's mouth! The SUV became horribly deformed.

In the blink of an eye, the front part of the SUV disappeared as well!

Chen Xiaolian sneered and opened up his tightly gripped left palm. Within his palm was a clump of rings from the hand grenades!

Within the SUV was the string of grenades.

"Go to Hell!"

...

BOOM!

A loud explosion rang out!

The head area of the monster instantly swelled up and its colossal body suddenly flipped over!

Resembling a derailed train that was going at high speed, the monster's body abruptly formed an S shape upon the surface of the highway.

Upon the giant's head, some damage could finally be seen and serrated fangs fell off it.

Several notches appeared upon its mouth.

An intense smell of gasoline assailed the surrounding as the entire ground was showered with its viscous liquid.

The monster issued a maddening roar, one that resembled the buzzing sound of a thousand bees!

The monster's body suddenly curved upward. Then, it started moving again with an even higher rate of velocity!

"Son of a bitch! It still won't die!" Chen Xiaolian crawled up; his right hand had already retrieved Tiger Tally from the system. He held it tightly within his palm.

"Come on out! Bai Qi!"

Chapter 136: Eruption of Conflict

Black misty qi swirled in the air!

Amongst the dense ink-like, black coloured qi, Bai Qi who was dressed in snow-white clothes stepped into existence.

His pale face was a mask of indifference.

Bai Qi charged forward!

The snow-white Bai Qi who was standing in the middle of the air transformed into a white rainbow as he moved! As his tiny body was still hovering in the air, his right hand had already retrieved the translucent short sword from his left sleeve.

Upon the blade that was as thin as a layer of onion, a faint colour of blood flowed.

Bai Qi showed no hesitation and swooped down toward the monster!

...

Keng!

The ray of white light, Bai Qi shot in front of the monster and Bai Qi's tiny body slammed onto the head of the monster. His sword was raised.

The sword descended!

The sharp edge of his sword slashed down onto the monster's head, creating a sharp earth-shattering sound!

Next, a sound similar to that of an electric cutter resonated out and sparks flew out from the monster's head! Receiving an attack from the short sword in Bai Qi's hand, the monster's body that was impervious to even grenade launchers...

It was slashed through!

It.Was.Slashed.Through!

Chen Xiaolian stared in utter amazement, dumbfounded.

...

The sharp edge of the sword slashed into the monster's head through its circular mouth! Then, after a shower of sparks, that part of the monster's mouth was cut into two semicircles. Next, Bai Qi moved toward the head.

Bai Qi had seemingly become an unparalleled electrical cutter; he sliced into the head area of the monster and pushed forward!

The monster's mouth was sliced into two, followed by its head, and followed by its body...

Bai Qi kept moving forward as his sharp sword kept up with him, cutting straight through!

The monster was originally dashing forward. Bai Qi too, had charged at it and the two of them clashed into each other simultaneously. The powerful momentum behind their movement caused Bai Qi's sword to cut through the monster's body, creating a gash with a length of over 20 metres!

Bai Qi appeared to have pierced into the body of the monster!

The monster's head was split cleanly in half while Bai Qi's body disappeared into the monster's body. In the next instant, a part of the monster's body, which was 20 metres away from its head suddenly swelled up!

Then...

With a bang, a human figure burst out and soared into the skies!

Bai Qi's body hovered in the air, his body, clothes and hair were completely coated with the monster's flesh and a faint reddish coloured viscous liquid.

However, a clump of black coloured flaming qi quickly appeared on his body, devouring all those residues. Bai Qi then returned to his formerly immaculate appearance.

Bai Qi somersaulted through the air and landed with both feet on the monster's body.

In that instant, the monster's durable body that was impervious to even grenade launchers, was pushed down by Bai Qi's legs!

The lower half of the monster's body bounced up! The life force of this elongated insect was incredibly resilient. Despite having its head cleaved in two, its lower body would still move under the influence of its nerves. It was like a huge whip that was vehemently lashing out!

Bai Qi's tiny body leapt up into the air again. This time, he plunged straight into the monster's body and broke out through the other end!

...

Chen Xiaolian was utterly overwhelmed by surprise.

Bai Qi, had turned out to be so powerful!

The monster that had brought an entire SUV of them into a situation where escape was not possible was unable to take a single strike from Bai Qi!

Chen Xiaolian felt relieved and he fell, sitting down on the ground, gasping for breath.

Next, a bizarre scenario occurred.

Bai Qi who was standing upon the surface of the monster's body suddenly raised his short sword, and pierced it into the monster's body...

With a speed visible to the naked eye, the colossal body of the train like monster shrivelled at an astonishing pace!

It was as though a certain force was madly siphoning out the flesh underneath the monster's tough shell!

Bai Qi remained standing on the surface of the monster's body, now using both hands to hold the hilt of his sword. His original expression of indifference was slowly exhibiting a faint sense of pain!

He appeared struggling to control, or rather to resist something...

At last, the massive train like body of the monster completely shrivelled up; it appeared no different from an iron sheet that had been flattened by

a roller and was left lying across the surface of the highway.

As for Bai Qi, he was kneeling on one knee atop the monster's body. He slowly raised his head and turned to look at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian instinctively felt that something about Bai Qi was different.

Within the black, ink-like eyes, something inexplicable seemed to have appeared.

Bai Qi stood up... and Chen Xiaolian noticed that Bai Qi's height appeared to have increased a little.

Inside Zero City, after devouring 30 pieces of Demon Soldier Fragments, Bai Qi's height reached up to roughly 140 cm.

Currently, Bai Qi seemed to have grown taller by several cm.

Bai Qi moved to the front of Chen Xiaolian. He slowly inserted the short sword on his right hand into his left sleeve before placing both arms into the sleeves. When he arrived before Chen Xiaolian, he knelt down.

"Hmmm?" Chen Xiaolian was surprised and saw Bai Qi extending his right palm forward. His palm was spread open. Judging by his actions, it appears that he wants something from me?

Chen Xiaolian immediately figured it out and retrieved a piece of black coloured Demon Soldier Fragment. Bai Qi accepted it and the Demon Soldier Fragment dissolved before disappearing within Bai Qi's open palm. After that, Bai Qi continued maintaining his posture, his hand remaining outstretched.

Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate and he retrieved another piece of Demon Soldier Fragment.

...

When Chen Xiaolian took out the tenth piece of Demon Soldier Fragment, Bai Qi retracted his hand and did not accept it.

"Enough."

Bai Qi's tone of voice remained highly laborious, like those of a baby just learning how to speak.

"You... you are stronger than I expected," Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. "I recall that your initial class is [A] Class – that strength you displayed earlier, how could that only be [A] Class?"

Bai Qi's gaze seemed empty. However, he tilted his head in deliberation, then he turned to regard the monster's shrivelled up corpse. "It... stronger... than... me. Its... mouth... weakness."

Weakness?

Chen Xiaolian's heart skipped a beat.

Wait!

How could Bai Qi know of this weakness?

A famed general from the Qin Dynasty, how could someone like that know about the weakness of a Japanese monster?

Looking at the shrivelled up corpse of the monster, Chen Xiaolian was unable to restrain himself and he asked. "You... absorbed its flesh and blood?"

"Life force," Bai Qi shook his head. He then looked at the Demon Soldier Fragment in Chen Xiaolian's hand and pointed at it. "Undead soul... balance."

"You mean, to let you keep absorbing in order to for you to grow stronger? Absorb some undead souls, then absorb some life force, alternating between both?"

Perhaps Chen Xiaolian's words were too complicated for him to understand. Bai Qi only stood there, gazing at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian felt dizzy and his body swayed. Soon, a feeling of exhaustion washed through him!

Clearly, as a summon type pet, after Bai Qi displayed that unbelievable degree of strength, he had also consumed a great deal of Chen Xiaolian's strength.

Also, Chen Xiaolian had been fighting continuously for the past two days. He had almost no opportunity to rest and recover. As of now, he was thoroughly exhausted. Finally, he swayed and was about to fall unconscious. However, before that, he gestured to Bai Qi, summoning him back into the Tiger Tally.

Chen Xiaolian felt his sense of awareness becoming increasingly blurred. He forced himself to crawl up toward the side of the highway and plopped down on the ground. Before he fell unconscious, he saw an SUV dashing over toward him.

The SUV flew until it was before him. However, before the SUV came to a halt, Qiao Qiao had already jumped down from the vehicle, running forward frantically...

...

...

When he woke up, Chen Xiaolian opened his eyes and saw that it was dark outside.

His immediate surrounding was obviously not the interior of a vehicle, but a room.

His body was resting upon a dry and warm bed.

He moved his head slightly and sat up.

The room was not large. It was a standard hotel room.

Right after he sat up, the door was opened and Qiao Qiao walked in from the outside. She walked to the side of the bed that Chen Xiaolian was on. "Are you awake?"

"You came back?" Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile. "Didn't I tell you to run away first?"

"Don't talk about it anymore! If I had not turned back, Qiao Qiao would really cut me up with a knife," Roddy walked into the room.

"You shut up!" Qiao Qiao's eyes were slightly red as she stared furiously at Roddy. "Roddy, you bastard! Back when Xiaolian told you to go forward,

you actually go forward and ignored him! And you call yourself a friend?”

Roddy was embarrassed but Chen Xiaolian only gave a sigh. “Enough. Back then, if he did not move forward, everyone in the SUV would die. I ordered Roddy to go ahead. If anyone is to be blamed, it is me. Roddy did that for the sake of everyone inside the SUV. Both you and Soo Soo were inside the SUV back then... I believe Roddy is not a coward who is afraid of death.”

Roddy’s eyes were slightly red and he let out a strained smile. “Those words of yours are making me feel guilty.”

“Chen Xiaolian, you are also a bastard!” Qiao Qiao suddenly used both hands to grab Chen Xiaolian’s collars and spat angrily. “Why! Why must you do something like this every time? What, do you like being a hero so much? Do you like to place all the burden on your shoulders alone?”

“Back in the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang instance dungeon, you took the initiative to stay behind as the decoy! Now again, you jumped down to bring up the rear on your own!”

“Chen Xiaolian! What were you trying to do?”

“I... I just want everyone to live on... especially you, Roddy and Soo Soo.”

“But that is not what we want!” Qiao Qiao suddenly burst out in tears and hugged Chen Xiaolian’s neck, her tears trickling down. “That is not what we want! I have never thought about matters regarding this game’s instance dungeon quest! If we can complete it, then we’ll complete it! If we cannot complete it, then just damn it to Hell! What I want is for us to be together! Survive together, do you understand?”

“If you die, even if we manage to get away, what do you think we can do? Could we still continue to carry out the quest? Then, continue maintaining this guild? Without you, Soo Soo and I will not care about any instance dungeon quest, much less any guild! If you are dead, do you think we would still continue onward?”

“...” Chen Xiaolian was speechless and he turned to Roddy. He suddenly realized that Roddy’s right eye was somewhat bruised. He blurted out.

“Roddy, what happened to your eye?”

Roddy’s face appeared somewhat embarrassed. “Err... I was... hit by someone...”

“Could it be Qiao Qiao had given you a lesson?”

“It’s not me!” Qiao Qiao answered coldly. “It was his sweetheart.”

Nicole?

Nicole beat up Roddy?

Qiao Qiao’s tone became furious. “After you jumped out of the SUV, the SUV kept heading straight. I told Roddy to stop and turn back, then... that Nicole suddenly rushed to the front to wrestle with Roddy. She even gave Roddy a beating as she tried to stop Roddy from turning back. She attempted to seize control of the steering to let the SUV move onward... that woman was simply going to leave you behind!”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He looked at Roddy, who gave a strained smile. “Don’t look at me. Truth be told, I have the same intention as Qiao Qiao. I admit I had panicked back then, but... sigh, I don’t even know how to explain it.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “Let’s not talk about that anymore.”

He got down from the bed and stood. Looking at the darkness of the night beyond the window, he asked. “Tell me about our current situation, where are we now?”

...

Two minutes later, Chen Xiaolian was able to grasp their current situation.

At the moment, they were all within a motel by the highway.

It was around six in the evening, about four hours since he fell unconscious.

The reason why their team would stop at this motel instead of progressing forward, was solely due to the fact that Chen Xiaolian had

fainted. Thus, Qiao Qiao and Roddy had decided to stop moving for the time being. They then found a place to rest up – Qiao Qiao was adamant about not moving forward if Chen Xiaolian had not woken up.

Qiao Qiao's opinion represented Roddy and Soo Soo's. Xia Xiaolei had also supported them. Lun Tai and Bei Tai were also inclined toward their opinion.

Nicole was the only one expressing dissatisfaction toward this decision.

"In other words, we have been staying here for three hours?"

"More accurately, we have been here for three hours and forty-two minutes."

Chen Xiaolian's heart sank a little – it was the equivalent of wasting away a considerable amount of the lead that their team had obtained during the start of the second phase. It was possible that some other participant had already found their quest target for protection and was moving out of Tokyo.

...

Everyone was resting in the living room when Chen Xiaolian walked out of the room.

Soo Soo and Xia Xiaolei were sitting together, while Lun Tai and Bei Tai also sat together. Only Nicole was standing alone beside the window, looking outside.

Observing the clearly divisive situation, Chen Xiaolian could not help but feel frustrated.

Seeing Chen Xiaolian walk out, Lun Tai quickly stood up and moved to stand before Chen Xiaolian. He gave Chen Xiaolian a hug. "Guild Leader, thank you! Your act of staying behind to bring up the rear had earned my utter respect."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Lun Tai. He could see the hesitation in Lun Tai's face and moved to pat Lun Tai's shoulder. "Enough, I understand what you are trying to say. That was my own choice. There is no need for

you to feel guilty. Besides, I did not do that for just you.”

Lun Tai’s face became slightly at ease.

Soo Soo ran over and grabbed Chen Xiaolian’s hand. She raised her small face and seriously propped up one finger out. “Once again!”

“Eh?”

“Once again! You tossed me away once again!” Soo Soo puffed up her bun like face, showing clear dissatisfaction. “You promised me, there will not be a next time! But you did it again!”

Chen Xiaolian held the little girl up and placed her on the sofa. He then patted her head. “I promise there won’t be a next time.”

It was then that Nicole turned around and walked until she was before Chen Xiaolian.

“I think there is something that we need to set straight.”

“Hmm?”

Nicole’s face was one of seriousness. “I am very worried about the fate of this temporary guild. Considering this guild’s structure, I feel that the chances of us completing the quest and leaving this instance dungeon are infinitely close to zero!”

“What did you say?” Qiao Qiao who was standing behind Chen Xiaolian narrowed her eyes and glared at Nicole.

Nicole sneered. “I have said it out clearly. And you had listened to it clearly. What else is there to ask?”

Chen Xiaolian remained silent. “Nicole, what exactly are you trying to say?”

“This guild. Most of its members are too amateurish,” Nicole said harshly. “Some are thinking that this instance dungeon is simply playing house. Or did they think that this game is just a more realistic video game? Or did they think this is a Hollywood movie? Are they holding on to a gamer’s attitude? Or are they selfishly thinking only about their own little clique?”

“No matter which type they are, what I want to say is that this approach is too amateurish! It will get someone killed!”

“You!” Qiao Qiao became furious. Just as she was about to move forward, Chen Xiaolian held her back.

“I am talking about you and you all!” Nicole’s voice was extremely cold as she pointed at Qiao Qiao, Roddy, Soo Soo and Xia Xiaolei!

“Selfish, emotional, inconsiderate of the bigger picture even at the expense of the guild’s interest!” Nicole sneered. “If not for the fact that I have no choice, I would never allow myself to stay with such a guild. I would most certainly never place my hopes of survival into this type of guild!”

“Who are you calling selfish!” Qiao Qiao was utterly provoked. She pointed at Nicole and shouted. “We wanted to turn back to save Chen Xiaolian! But you were against it! You only cared about your own survival, disregarding Chen Xiaolian’s! You even beat up Roddy! If someone is being selfish, then it is you!”

“Is that so?”

Nicole’s eyebrows were raised and she stared at Qiao Qiao. She coldly retorted. “It appears that you do not even understand one thing! And that is: What is the meaning of a guild!”

Qiao Qiao was caught off guard. “What do I not understand? Chen Xiaolian is the Guild Leader! Could it be that we are supposed to just watch him die without doing anything to save him?”

“He is the Guild Leader. However, he is only one person. Could his one life outweigh the lives of everyone within the guild?” Nicole bluntly criticized Qiao Qiao. “I know that you and him are together! So, for you, his life is naturally very important! Not just you, within this guild, Roddy, that little girl, Soo Soo, Xia Xiaolei... all of you are part of a small clique! Everyone else is just a distant part of this guild of yours. I will not comment on what feelings you may have for each other...”

“But Miss Qiao Qiao, you have probably forgotten one matter. And that

is what we are trying to accomplish right now. At any moment, someone could die; there is also the risk that this entire guild might be exterminated!

“At that point in time, we were facing off against an enemy we could not deal with. When a guild member takes the initiative to stay behind to bring up the rear, that means he is choosing to sacrifice himself so that the other members could have a hope for survival!

“But, what did you do? Due to the affection between you two, you wanted to stop the SUV, to turn back!

“Yes, perhaps due to your emotions, you were willing to die together with Chen Xiaolian... however, did you ask if the others were willing?

“You did not even consider that by doing so, Chen Xiaolian’s sacrificial act of staying behind to bring up the rear would become meaningless!

“This is not a damned romance movie! This is also not a place for you to show your love! This is a matter of life and death, the life and death of everyone!

“This is war! Do you still not get it?

“This is a battlefield! This battlefield is a cruel one!

“There will be deaths! There will be sacrifices!”

“That is because the one to make the sacrifice is not you!” Qiao Qiao sneered.

“If it was me, I would complete my duty,” Nicole answered coldly. “I have been through countless battles and have also taken the duty of bringing up the rear before. However, when I am bringing up the rear, I would not hope to see my team members run back emotionally! That would ruin all my efforts! It would also cause others trouble!”

She stared at Qiao Qiao. “You are simply not a battle-ready guild. You are more like a family out on a sightseeing trip! That’s right! You are just a family, prioritizing emotions, without any combat discipline! You people have no combat experience!

“I cannot even imagine... if such a scenario were to occur again, would you still have such a good luck!”

Roddy spoke out with a perplexed expression. “Nicole... I admit that some of what you said is correct. We are truly not a battle-ready guild. You are a Floating Angel, one of the security personnel of Zero City, a paramilitary guild.

“Compared to you people, we are more like a ‘civilians’ guild.

“That is why we are not used to what you call ‘sacrifice’ and prioritize more on feelings instead. As a friend, I cannot just watch and run away as Chen Xiaolian sacrifice himself to bring up the rear for us.

“We cannot do it.”

Nicole retorted coldly. “Who are you referring to with your so-called ‘we’?”

Roddy suddenly froze.

“Your so-called ‘we’ includes you, Qiao Qiao and that little girl Soo Soo. Then, have you asked Xia Xiaolei? Is he willing to die together with you all? Have you asked Lun Tai and Bei Tai? Are they willing to die together with you all?

“Get this straight! If you want establish a guild, then act like one!

“Otherwise, this guild of yours had better not expand itself! Just maintain these few of ‘your people’ within! Since you people are willing to live and die together, that is your own prerogative. However, you will get others killed during crucial moments! Please do not drag others down with you!” Nicole said furiously. “Roddy! Do you know why I beat you up when we were in the SUV?”

Nicole took a deep breath and suppressed her anger. “It is not because I am afraid of death! The number of battles that I have been through far exceeds the total number of battles that you all have gone through! I have undergone situations that were more dangerous and more desperate! The reason I am angry is because, back then, there were still others within the SUV! You and Qiao Qiao wanted to turn back and find Chen Xiaolian. Did

you ask the opinion of others? What authority do you have to make decisions for others – especially considering how that decision would determine their life and death?

“I am selfish? Bullshit!

“Who is the one who is being selfish?”

Ignoring Qiao Qiao and Roddy, Nicole turned toward Chen Xiaolian.
“You are the Guild Leader!”

“... I am,” Chen Xiaolian sighed.

“You personally made the decision, personally issued the order. Everyone inside the SUV heard you,” Nicole’s face was as cold as ice. “You said that you will deal with the monster, you have a method to escape. You ordered to have the SUV to keep moving forward and to not stop no matter what. Otherwise, everyone in the vehicle would not be able to survive – Chen Xiaolian, is this not what you said?”

“... it is,” Chen Xiaolian nodded helplessly.

“When a guild is facing danger, everyone must unconditionally obey the orders of the Guild Leader! If they have doubts about the Guild Leader’s ability, they can point it out. However, since they have acknowledged you as the Leader, during times of crisis, your orders becomes the highest and only priority for the whole guild! An order that must be executed!” Nicole continued harshly. “However, barely seconds after you gave that order, someone can overturn it? And ignore the lives of others inside the SUV?”

Chen Xiaolian was rendered speechless.

Nicole turned to regard the few of them. “Qiao Qiao, I have no prejudice toward you. The magnitude of your love is such that you are willing to die for your loved one and even die together with him... that is your right! But please remember, you only have the right to determine your own fate! You have no right to determine the fate of others!

“The same applies to you, Roddy!

“Your friendship with Chen Xiaolian and your willingness to sacrifice

yourself for a friend is also your right! I will not deny the significance of those emotions. But at the same time... you only have the right to kill yourself! You have no right to lead others with you as you go kill yourself!

“Lastly, in this guild, does the Guild Leader’s order mean anything?

“Later on, when we encounter another dangerous battle, could anyone just be a hothead and overturn the Guild Leader’s order and do whatever they want?

“What we are going through now is fraught with dangers. If the fact that someone’s relationship with others is good or that someone is the loved one of another gives them the right to ignore combat discipline, then...

“Then, in my opinion, we had better not continue onward! Because if we are to continue onward, you will all be exterminated!”

“You... you can only say so because you are not the one to be affected,” Qiao Qiao stared at Nicole. “If it was your best friend, or your loved ones who encounter this situation, you...”

“If I am to encounter such a situation where my loved one stayed behind to be the rearguard and might potentially die...” Nicole’s face was indifferent as she spoke out coldly. “If I want to live and die with him, I will jump down the vehicle by myself! And not force the entire vehicle filled with people to turn around!”

Chapter 137: Truly Strange, Truly Strange

Listening to the dispute between Nicole and Qiao Qiao, Chen Xiaolian fell into silence.

Chen Xiaolian had to admit. Despite the harshness in her words, some of Nicole's words had struck the nail on the head!

Truthfully, neither Nicole nor Qiao Qiao's view was wrong. However, Chen Xiaolian had come to realize that he was facing a highly problematic issue.

This guild... what kind of path should it take?

From the moment their guild was formed, it was originally done to give them the authority to select instance dungeons – that was the most immediate advantage that a guild has.

But the truth was, things were not that simple.

The type that Nicole spoke of should be the most ideal form of a guild: Calm, rational, militarized, obedient, combat tactics – the Floating Angels that she was part of probably falls into this category of guild.

No, perhaps even Thorned Flower Guild was such a type of guild.

When necessary, sacrifices will be made. The Guild Leader's position would be similar to that of a military commander!

Kindness cannot be used to control soldiers! [1]

As for Qiao Qiao's version, it was an idealistic guild that prioritizes feelings, where friendship and feelings take the dominant position. Everyone will live together and die together... this type of feeling was certainly something good. However... within this perilous game, such a guild would face an infinitely high chance of being utterly decimated!

For Chen Xiaolian, he was originally in favour of the latter.

But now, he came to realize that things may not be that simple.

Their guild currently has only seven people.

If he was to consider who would actually go through with living and dying together, there were only himself, Qiao Qiao, Roddy and Soo Soo.

Although Xia Xiaolei's relationship with them was quite good...they have only just met a while ago. In addition, he was too young. He might impulsively offer up his life in the heat of the moment... but to accept something like this would be too immoral.

As for Lun Tai and Bei Tai, despite having obtained their trust and their recognition as a Guild Leader, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were only viewing them as 'partners'.

As partners in the field of battle, they would have a cooperative relationship and fight together.

However, they have yet to reach the point where they would live and die together.

If this guild were to progress according to Qiao Qiao's concept, then the current situation would undoubtedly cause Lun Tai, Bei Tai and even Xia Xiaolei to feel awkward.

Now that he thought about, Chen Xiaolian could imagine how awkward Lun Tai and Bei Tai had felt when Qiao Qiao and Roddy were adamantly wanting to turn back to find him.

Turn back to accompany him in death? Lun Tai and Bei Tai have yet to have such deep feelings for him. Back then, the two of them had remained silent. They had done so due to their sense of duty, but that does not mean they were really willing.

If such an incident were to continue occurring, this guild will certainly crack apart!

Moreover, there was a very problematic and cruel question, one that Chen Xiaolian would never speak out on his own. Perhaps this question already existed within Lun Tai and Bei Tai's mind, but was simply left unsaid.

If back then, the one to stay behind was not him, but Lun Tai and Bei Tai... would Qiao Qiao and Roddy adamantly insist on turning back to live

and die together?

This question... just by thinking about it would cause one to feel a chill down their spine.

This was not a question that they would bring up, but would they not think about it?

“Enough! Stop quarrelling!”

Chen Xiaolian’s face suddenly turned grim and he spoke out solemnly. “As the Guild Leader, I will earnestly consider this matter. At present though, the biggest problem we face is to overcome this instance dungeon! As for what comes next, I promise that after this instance dungeon is over, I will make a decision on it. I will make a decision on what path of development our guild will take in the future!”

He walked to stand before Nicole and extended his hand. “Nicole, although you are just a temporary guild member, I am thankful for your suggestion. Incompatible way of thoughts comes from the difference in our positions. However, from an attitude point of view, I am thankful for your sacrifice. Yet, I hope we can first put aside our disputes and seek a common ground so that we can complete this instance dungeon together.”

“... I agree,” Nicole exhaled. “This is your guild, you have the final say.”

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Qiao Qiao and saw her maintaining her silence, showing her support for Chen Xiaolian’s decision.

“Now, let us discuss what to do next,” Chen Xiaolian gestured for everyone to be seated.

“It is currently six thirty in the evening,” Chen Xiaolian looked at the clock on the wall. “How is our current situation?”

“We are still on the highway. The distance to Saitama Prefecture’s Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel is not that far off. If we move out immediately, we can arrive at the destination by evening,” Lun Tai quickly said. “For the time being, we have no casualties and our team is intact. Our quest target is also secured... we also have a

prisoner, that bald headed girl, Nagase Komi.

“This motel is very quiet and has no staff members. When we arrived, we found this place to be empty. Even though the facilities are intact, there is no one here. It is similar to the situation at the rest stop. However, we have yet to encounter any attack from monsters.”

After Lun Tai had finished his explanation, Nicole continued. “We currently face a problem. We have enough firearms, but insufficient ammunition. Back then, I only robbed a squad of Special Assault Team, not a military armoury! We now have less than one third in terms of ammunition. If we have to engage in another battle as intense as that from the rest stop, we will not be able to last. Not to mention, the hand grenades and grenade launchers have all been used up. We now only have firearms ammunition.”

“My rifle is an anti-material rifle and could be somewhat repurposed for heavy fire,” Roddy interjected. “However, a sniper rifle does not have enough firing coverage. So, it will still be lacking somewhat.”

“We only have one vehicle. This motel is empty and I cannot find any spare vehicles,” Nicole continued. “However, there is a good news... my Floater has finished recharging and could be used.”

That was indeed good news!

Chen Xiaolian felt relieved. With a Floater around, Nicole would be a real Floating Angel!

Ignoring all else, as long as she can display that powerful battle strength when destroying that Thunderstorm Tank back in Tokyo, their team would have obtained a very strong supporter!

“At the moment, we should still be ahead of the other participants of this instance dungeon,” Lun Tai added. “We have been staying here for over three hours. No other participants appeared. Though, I fear that our advantage has been reduced.”

“... I am sorry. This is all because of me,” Chen Xiaolian sighed.

“No, this was my decision. If anyone is to blame, then it is me,” Qiao

Qiao spoke out. "I am the one who insisted on staying here and wait for you to wake up."

"Now is not the time to throw the blame," Lun Tai shook his head. "Besides... staying here and waiting for our Guild Leader to awake is something I agree with. Our team needs a leader after all."

"I think I grasp the overall situation," Chen Xiaolian rubbed his chin. "What about our quest target?"

"She is resting in a room. I gave her a tranquilizing injection," Nicole shook her head. "I purchased it from the system. It is a strong tranquilizer that will put her to sleep for a few hours. But, we can wake her up with the release agent at any given moment. This was my own decision. However, it should not cause any harm to her."

"As for that Nagase Komi, we did not do anything to restrict her freedom. She could leave at any time. However, that girl had lost her courage from fear. Even if we use a stick to shoo her, she wouldn't dare leave us," Bei Tai laughed.

"Then it's decided," Chen Xiaolian stood up. "Twenty minutes to prepare! Lun Tai, Bei Tai, search this motel and see if there is anything that we could use. If you find anything useful, just bring it together."

"All right, we'll check it out," The two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai got up. Lun Tai gave a strained smile. "However, we will only be able to find some food. We can forget about finding weapons. Japan is not like the US. If this is the US, just searching a few residential homes will net us one or two firearms. Since Japan is a country that bans firearms, we can forget about that. I'll go look around now."

"All right, I'll have to trouble you two for this. Be safe," Chen Xiaolian quickly replied. "Roddy and Nicole, you two are responsible for the condition of the vehicle. Gasoline, status, recheck them again. In twenty minutes time, we'll head out."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Xia Xiaolei. "You are responsible for bringing Takeuchi Mikiko. Right, that Nagase Komi... keep an eye on her. Do not be careless. If she is willing, then let her follow. If she is not, then that is

fine.”

“She will definitely be willing. She fears being discarded by us,” Xia Xiaolei laughed.

“Actually...” Nicole suddenly intercepted, but then proceeded to shake her head. “Never mind, it’s nothing.”

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Nicole. In fact, he could guess what Nicole had wanted to say.

Nicole’s intention was not that hard to guess. She probably wanted to leave that prisoner, Nagase Komi, behind.

The girl no longer has anything of value to give. She does not have much battle strength and had confessed everything she knows. She would only become a hindrance if they took her along. As such, why not just leave her?

However, Chen Xiaolian himself was also a newcomer. He was far from being capable of doing something like this that Nicole, who had survived while being tempered by the sixteen years within this game, would do.

“If we discard her and the participants behind us finds her, she may expose the situation of our team... as for killing her to silence her, I am not that cruel,” Chen Xiaolian directly spoke out those words to Nicole.

Nicole’s eyebrows were raised and she said nothing.

“All right, we’ll split up and move. In twenty minutes time, we’ll gather downstairs by the SUV.”

After everyone had left the room, only Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo were left.

“Actually...” Qiao Qiao opened her mouth but Chen Xiaolian shook his head. He looked into Qiao Qiao’s eyes and said warmly. “You do not have to explain anything to me, Qiao Qiao.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian then spoke out slowly. “If we are a battle-type guild, people will probably criticize you as being emotional. However... as you boyfriend, to have you run over to find me in when I was facing a situation of life and death – I am touched!”

“Xiaolian...”

“Perhaps we may never be able to do what Nicole advocated, becoming a paramilitary guild like the Floating Angels. However... that was never our original intention to begin with,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “Our only goal in this game is to survive! Not to survive alone, but to have everyone survive together! If we lose even one, that would be an unacceptable result for me. So... Qiao Qiao, you do not need to mention this anymore.”

After a moment, Chen Xiaolian abruptly had a thought. “There is a question. Why did no one ask me that question earlier?”

“About how you finished off that monster?” Qiao Qiao narrowed her eyes.

“En, could it be that none of you felt it odd?”

“Of course it felt odd,” Qiao Qiao frowned. “We all saw the monster’s corpse. How did you do it? Although I had wanted to ask, I saw that not even Nicole had forwarded that question. Even Lun Tai remained silent regarding it.”

After pondering for a while, Chen Xiaolian said. “I think I understand what they are thinking.”

Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Nicole were all veterans of this game.

Amongst veterans, there would surely be unwritten rules.

No participant of this game, regardless of Players or Awakened ones, would be willing to divulge information regarding their own strength. This was especially true in regards to their trump cards. Those things cannot be revealed lightly.

Those would become their greatest asset when preserving their life!

That was why, even though they were partners within a guild, Lun Tai and Bei Tai had never taken the initiative to reveal the hidden information regarding their skills.

Chen Xiaolian only knew that Lun Tai’s skill was of the Body Technique

Division. It would allow Lun Tai to transform into a powerful berserking warrior. As for Bei Tai, his skill was similar to that of area control. It allowed him to utilize the airflow to lock the enemy and restrict the enemy's movement capacity.

However, nothing else was known regarding the specifics of their skills: Skill class, skill restriction etc.

Since Lun Tai and Bei Tai did not say anything, Chen Xiaolian was smart enough to not ask.

That was because they have yet to become true friends who have gone through life and death together. They have yet to reach that point where they could open their hearts toward each other without reservation.

Presently, they have only accepted each other as partners. However, they have yet to reach the point where they would entrust their life to each other.

After all, this guild of theirs was newly formed. Furthermore, this instance dungeon was the first time that they were participating as partners.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai's former Guild Leader, Nangong [2] had obviously known about their skills. However... the present Chen Xiaolian had yet to attain the level of trust and position that Guild Leader Nangong had with them.

Vice versa, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were sensible enough to not ask Chen Xiaolian what his secret was – how he finished off the monster, what skill did he use. They did not ask these questions.

As of now, the only skills Chen Xiaolian was informed of was those of his best friends.

Roddy possessed the Mechanical Heart and was capable of controlling all electronics and machinery. However, it was restricted by the class of the skill.

Soo Soo possessed the blazing Phoenix skill and a body of the fire element.

Xia Xiaolei was a humanoid discount card with Extrasensory Perception, which enhanced the area of detection for his radar. (Everyone's radar faced a restriction within this instance dungeon. Thus, this Extrasensory Perception becomes unusable within this Japan instance dungeon. This has greatly reduced Xia Xiaolei's capabilities.)

As for Qiao Qiao...

Her skill was the most special amongst them!

Her skill was known as: Child of Darkness.

"Truthfully, this technological type instance dungeon is a big disadvantage for you," Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "However, I really hope that my girlfriend does not become a monster whose body is filled with the power of darkness in the future."

"You're the monster here," Qiao Qiao laughed.

...

Tokyo Tower.

A gaunt figure stood atop this symbolic structure of Tokyo, his black colored hair was ruffled from the high altitude winds.

"Guild Leader?"

A voice came from the headset.

"Yes, how is it?"

"Our advance team had been completely exterminated," The voice coming from the headset sounded slightly mournful. "We have lost contact with the interception team that we sent out for over four hours. It is likely that they have all been wiped out. According to the last received transmission, we could hear their miserable cries and a peculiar sound. They have probably encountered a very powerful enemy."

"Enough, there is no need to be worried about this matter," The black haired man said indifferently. "Those people are nothing more than disposed pawns to begin with. Their demise is something that we have long since anticipated. At the very least, they did send back some useful

information.”

“All right, you’re the boss, Guild Leader.”

“I have said it before, do not call me Guild Leader, I do not like that term,” The black haired man said with indifference. “We are just a temporarily established guild. After this instance dungeon ends, we will discuss about the future of this guild. For now, let’s just call each other by our names.”

“... but everyone highly respects you,” The voice through the headset revealed a trace of reverence. “Mr. Culkin, if not for you, most of us would not be able to pass even the first phase.”

“We’ll talk about the rest after this instance dungeon concludes.”

Culkin then slowly continued. “Don’t you think that our current guild has too many people? I do not want to create a large-scale guild. I want elites who are of use, only a small number would suffice. I feel that after this instance dungeon is over, only five to six people within this guild will meet my standards for being my guild member.

“Naturally, no matter what happens, you are the one I value most, Lei Hu.”

Through the headset, a trace of smile could be heard from Lei Hu’s voice: “I agree with your point of view, Culkin. I too, think that there is no need to have too many trash with us. Five to six people is enough to become the cornerstone of a guild... naturally, all must follow your leadership.”

“All right, has the monster chasing after us left yet?”

“It has gone back. However, our third team has been wiped out and their energy sources were seized,” Lei Hu’s voice showed traces of fear. “That monster... is too powerful!”

“There is no need to worry about all these. We do not really need those energy sources. Five is enough. Those extras will only be used as decoy to lure away powerful enemies. All we need to do in this instance dungeon is to preserve our strength. Then... survive out of this instance dungeon.

That alone is a victory.

“Right, I actually do not intend to forcefully complete the second phase. If this second phase proves too difficult, I would rather give up and have us all enter the punishment instance dungeon. Trust me, I have a special method for the punishment instance dungeon.”

“Of course we trust you, Culkin,” Lei Hu then asked. “So, right now... do we give up on the quest target? And rest here in Tokyo while waiting for the second phase to end?”

“No, Tokyo is too dangerous. More and more people are transforming into monsters. We’ll move according to plan, leave Tokyo for Saitama Prefecture. This is a ‘mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole from behind’ game [3]. Lei Hu, all we need to do is wait for an opportunity.”

The conversation ended.

Culkin’s clothes billowed as he stood atop Tokyo Tower, breathing in the view of Tokyo below. The city that never sleeps had turned considerably dark and the neon lights that were usually lit up at this time had already disappeared due to the ensuing chaos. Many areas in Tokyo were now in utter darkness. Occasionally, some light could be seen glowing, the light from flames that were the result of rioting neighbourhoods.

Culkin looked down upon the city, a smile forming on his mouth.

“Qiu Yun, you are a real idiot. A pity, you can no longer witness... just you watch, in the future, my current guild will surely surpass Meteor Rock Guild by a thousand times!”

...

A strange carriage was running madly through the highway in the night.

Under the moon light, the bald head of Tian Lie shone brightly atop the open carriage.

A thick cigar protruded from his mouth. He smiled as his hand held

onto a whip made from wringed steel. The edge of the steel whip scraped across the surface of the highway, creating a long line of sparks!

Tian Lie laughed and sang loudly out against the night winds.

“Two~ tigers, two~ tigers, they’re so fast, they’re so fast, one~ has no tail~, one~ has no ears~, truly strange, truly strange [4]! Hahahahahaha! Run faster! You two trashes! Run with all your might!”

After saying that, Tian Lie flicked his wrist and the steel whip viciously lashed out toward the front!

In front of the carriage, a few iron chains as thick as an arm were tied around two monsters as they ran with all their strength!

The two monsters body were hairy and their huge bodies were filled with scars. They have flat mouths and square-shaped heads while their four limbs were very long and thick.

Surprisingly, these were the monsters transformed out from the ordinary citizens within Tokyo. They were mighty monsters specializing in running and jumping.

These two monsters appeared bigger and stronger than the rest. At present however, it did not possess even the slightest image of savagery. Under the ministrations of Tian Lie, they could only shriek out in fear and pain.

The steel whip struck the monster’s body, instantly tearing out flesh and blood! The two monsters could only wail out and put more effort as they pulled the carriage quickly across the highway...

With these powerful monsters pulling it, the speed of the carriage was in no way inferior to that of a car!

Watching the monsters wailing, Tian Lie laughed out loud and lashed out brutally with the steel whip again. Then, he sat back down on the carriage and took a deep drag from the cigar.

At the back of the open carriage lay a figure.

It was a female. Her appearance was hidden by the darkness and only a

slim figure within an attractive flight attendant's uniform could be faintly observed. Her figure curled up within the carriage and both her hands were handcuffed to the carriage.

Hearing the wails of the monsters, the female flight attendant also issued out a fearful cry.

"Little girl, do not cry. The whip did not hit you," Tian Lie puffed out a mouthful of smoke. "You should feel happy. I have never liked killing women. Don't worry, I will not hurt you. In fact, I will safely escort you to the designated location. You are the quest target for protection after all!"

After saying that, Tian Lie ignored the female flight attendant's sobbing sounds and clipped the steel whip onto the carriage. He then placed his hand on his head while biting onto the cigar and continued singing.

"Two~ tigers, two~ tigers... one~ has no ears... truly strange, truly strange..."

"Haha, my little Floating Angel, wait for me!"

Culkin, raw: '卡尔金', pinyin: 'kǎ'ěr jīn'.

Lei Hu, raw: '雷狐', pinyin: 'léi hú'. Lei means thunder, Hu means fox.

1 'Kindness cannot be used to control soldiers'. Raw: '慈不掌兵', pinyin: 'cí bù zhǎng bīng'. An old saying amongst soldiers. When leading soldiers, one can show care, but not excessively.

2 Guild Leader Nangong, first appeared in Chapter 72. Things did not end well for him...

3 The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole from behind. An idiom which indicates the act of reaping gains without realizing the danger coming from behind or in secret.

4 Two Tigers is a Chinese nursery rhyme.

Chapter 138: Objective Location

It was around ten o'clock at night.

"This is the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel?" As their vehicle came to a halt beside the building, Chen Xiaolian who was seated on the first passenger seat could not help but express his doubts.

Under the darkness of the night, the building before them appeared no different to a fortress made purely of reinforced concrete.

It was as though a dam had been constructed on the road.

"This is the coordinates," Chen Xiaolian opened the door and was the first to jump out. His hand held onto his gun as he remained vigilant. He was then followed by Lun Tai and Bei Tai.

"Coordinates confirmed," Chen Xiaolian carefully reexamined the quest notification and their surroundings. "This is the designated location."

He walked to Takeuchi Mikiko's side and looked at the slightly depressed Japanese girl. "Have you been here before?"

"...no," Takeuchi Mikiko's voice was filled with traces of panic and she vigorously shook her head. "The school had organized a visit here before. But, it is only for the top students... I, I did not come here before."

While they were on their way to this place, Chen Xiaolian had gotten a rough understanding regarding the general information about this Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel.

Simply put, this was a huge underground water management system. It was responsible for managing the drainage system of Tokyo and the surrounding areas. Additionally, it was also the biggest man-made drainage system!

That was right, the biggest!

"This should be the entrance to the drainage system. The drainage system itself should be located 50 meters below ground from here,"

Nicole said with indifference. "It is a huge, circular underground drainage tunnel, one with a diameter spanning over 10 meters and over 6 km in length. The length of the underground drainage tunnels throughout the area of Tokyo totals up to 16,000 km, all of them could be connected to this drainage tunnel. At the same time, they also constructed 5 massive water management silos. At any rate... this is an unprecedented underground marvel of engineering."

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Nicole. "You read up a lot on it?"

"When heading to Tokyo, I had checked up on some information," Nicole shook her head. "I am not a rookie. Gathering information is one of the basic combat qualities for each Floating Angel."

"Now what?" Lun Tai asked. "What do we do now?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Takeuchi Mikiko and frowned. "First, escort the quest target inside. After that... we'll decide after considering the situation. Be prepared for any changes."

They left the vehicle and their team walked toward the underground drainage system. Everyone had carefully placed Takeuchi Mikiko in the middle position and they carefully headed toward the drainage system.

It was very quiet during night time and no figures could be seen at all.

As they moved closer, they found that there were no security personnel around. Everything within their surroundings was still.

For the drainage facility that was responsible for controlling all the drainage system within Tokyo area to be empty, something was naturally not right. This situation caused everyone's vigilance to shift to the highest state.

The building constructed purely from reinforced concrete exuded a sense of coldness.

After reaching the bottom area of the building, they saw that there was a valve door. The rotating capstan on the door had been pulled open and the valve door was left ajar.

Chen Xiaolian gestured to Lun Tai. Lun Tai then headed forward, moving close to the door and listening from the outside. After that, he raised his gun and moved in through the side. His weapon had already been equipped with a tactical flashlight; after the beam of light from his flashlight swept through, Lun Tai gave the 'safe' sound.

They then entered through the valve door and into the interior of the drainage system.

"This... something does not feel right."

Nicole held up her nose. "Do you smell that, what a strange smell."

"Yes, I smell it," Roddy nodded his head. "It smells like... disinfectant?"

"It smells of hospitals," Bei Tai muttered. "I hate that smell the most."

They were inside a passageway with metal stands, platforms and pipes on both sides.

Chen Xiaolian soon found a sign hanging on the walls.

"The front should be where the elevator lies. According to this sign, we can reach the underground drainage system through the elevator," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "However, it is also written that only staff members are allowed."

They all turned on the tactical flashlights installed on their firearms, letting several beams of light spill out and illuminate the area.

The interior of this cold building was devoid of any sound and was deathly still.

Walking through the passageway for over 20 meters, they found the staff elevator. However, it required a card. Chen Xiaolian looked at Roddy. "You are up."

Roddy gave a faint smile and moved forward. He extended his hand to make contact with the control knobs of the elevator. Instantly after activating his 'Mechanical Heart' skill, the display lights flashed with a green light. The doors of the elevator opened. Following a buzzing sound, the lights of the elevator also lit up.

The elevator was a staff elevator and has a very spacious interior. Even when all of them had entered, they were barely able to occupy half the area within the elevator.

There were no floor numbers on the buttons within the elevator. There was only one button. Clearly, this was a direct elevator access.

“How unexpected. The Japanese people often build narrow houses, but their elevators turned out to be so spacious,” In an attempt to lift the atmosphere, Chen Xiaolian cracked a joke. Unfortunately, the joke failed miserably as no one laughed.

Glancing at the shivering Takeuchi Mikiko, Chen Xiaolian placed a hand on the girl’s shoulder. “Do not be afraid! There are so many of us protecting you.”

Takeuchi Mikiko raised her head and looked at Chen Xiaolian with a fearful expression. She bit her lips and said nothing.

Moments later, the elevator reached the underground and jolted noticeably. The elevator doors slowly opened to reveal a brightly lit passageway.

Luminescence lights were attached to the ceiling and the white light illuminating the area was devoid of warmth. Instead, a despondent feeling could be felt.

The passageway felt somewhat cold. After walking out from the elevator, they found it branching in two directions. Both passageways have no end in sight and were slightly curved.

“Left or right?” Qiao Qiao asked Chen Xiaolian.

As Chen Xiaolian was hesitating, suddenly...

Bang!!

A clear sound rang out from the far left passageway!

Everyone’s faces turned tense! Lun Tai and the others subconsciously raised their firearms.

That sound was clearly gunfire!

...

“Yoko-chan! Are you aware that you have made the wrong choice? Because of your wrong choice, you will receive a very severe punishment! Additionally... you will also drag me down with you!”

A middle-aged man in work clothes was holding onto a gun as he stepped closer.

His hair was considerably thinning and had already showed baldness at the center part. Upon his work clothes was a name tag.

His gun was pointed down at a middle-aged Japanese woman, who was kneeling down by the corner. Both her hands were clutching onto the metal pipes fixed on the wall and tears were evident on her face.

She looked around 40 years old, but still had a lingering charm to her. Although the lines by her eyes had revealed her age, her facial features still made her look somewhat beautiful. Especially considering that she was wearing a black colored work clothes. Additionally, some parts of her attire had been torn. The same was true for the pair of stockings that she wore. Her appearance possessed the capacity to fill men with criminally impulsive thoughts.

“Domoto-san! I beg you, I beg you! I just want to save my daughter!” The middle-aged woman broke down in tears. “You’ve promised me! You promised me! You said that as long as I do what you said, you will ensure my safety! And my daughter’s!”

“Idiot! Now that the situation has devolved into such a chaotic state, we no longer have any ability to go to Tokyo to pick up someone who does not matter!” “The Japanese man known as Domoto snapped back. “Right now, you had better hand over the item to me! If you do not, I will personally kill you!”

“Domoto!” The Japanese woman screamed sharply. “You lied to me! You said that you will treat me very, very well! You said you will love me with care! I... I...”

“You idiot!”

The Japanese man threw a slap at Yoko's face, causing her to stagger and blood to trickle down the edges of her mouth. "What I need right now is that item you brought out! Hurry up and give it to me! Do not force me! Yoko!"

Domoto raised the muzzle of the gun and opened the gun's safety catch. "I do not wish to be the one to kill you! Yoko, I still remember that beautiful night that we shared together. As long as you hand over that item to me obediently... just tell me where you hid it. I will let you live. Not only that... I promise you, I will think of a method to send some people over to escort your daughter to a safe place! How about it?"

"I will never trust you again!" Yoko suddenly shouted out. "You are a liar! Liar! I know what terrible things you have done! Such a terrible act... will lead to so many, many deaths! God will certainly punish fiends like you!"

"Idiot! For the sake of a great undertaking, sacrificing some ants is only normal," Domoto sighed. "Since you are unwilling to tell me, then I can only kill you."

"Even if you kill me, you won't get away either!" Yoko sneered. "Do not take me for a fool! The situation has escalated beyond your control! As of now, you and I share the same position! You have also become a homeless dog! The experimental product from the lab went out of control and had gone loose! This evil is the fruits of you evildoing bastards! You all did something to terrifying, yet you lost control of the situation!"

"This incident will definitely be settled. Then... after that, you will definitely receive judgement!"

"Die!" Domoto's eyes had turned red and he raised the muzzle of the gun, his finger placed upon the trigger.

Bang!

At the very moment that the bullet was firing out through the muzzle, a hand extended forward from the side and pushed the muzzle to the other side!

A bullet fired out and it nearly grazed Yoko's face as it flew out! It struck the surface of the reinforced concrete walls, causing sparks to fly out.

After ricocheting a few times, the bullet bounced back and a miserable scream was heard coming out of Domoto. The ricocheting bullet had struck his thigh and he fell to his knees onto the ground.

“Argh! The bullet hit my leg!”

The one who shoved the gun aside was Chen Xiaolian.

The Japanese man was crying as he clutched his thigh, sitting on the floor. Chen Xiaolian observed him coolly and bent down to retrieve that man's gun.

The sound of rapid footsteps rang out from behind him as his team members moved forward. Then, he heard a sharp cry!

“Oka-san!!”

Takeuchi Mikiko, who had remained silent and fearful suddenly turned mad and rushed out. She extricated herself from Xia Xiaolei beside her and threw herself onto the arms of the Japanese woman. Next, she began to cry loudly.

Chen Xiaolian was surprised. He turned around and looked at his team members behind him. “If I am not mistaken, the Japanese meaning for oka-san is mother, right?”

...

Chapter 139: Storyline

“Shh!” Nicole made a gesture to hush Chen Xiaolian before quickly whispering out. “Listen carefully! This must be the appearance of characters from the storyline!”

Special storyline?

Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter laugh inwardly.

...

“Mikiko! How did you get here?” Yoko embraced her daughter and her body trembled as she looked on at the crying Takeuchi Mikiko with a surprised expression.

She was a mature woman after all. She subconsciously raised her head to look at Chen Xiaolian and his team, observing their heavily armed appearance... appearance wise, they were all wearing the standard equipment, combat clothes and tactical vests reserved for the Special Assault Team.

The appearance that their team gave off was similar to that of... a team of armed police forces!

“You people are from the police force?” Yoko suddenly broke down in tears. “Have the police finally arrived?”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything and simply looked at the woman. Roddy who was standing beside, darted his eyes around and quickly shouted. “That is right! We are the Special Assault Team from the Metropolitan Police Department. We received a report that someone is engaging in illegal activities here, so...”

“It is not merely an illegal activity!” Yoko panicked and cried out in a loud voice. “It is terrorism! It is a very serious crime! It is a very, very serious crime! They will kill many, many people!”

Qiao Qiao had already moved over. She knelt beside Yoko and slowly asked under Chen Xiaolian’s observation. “Do not be anxious. Tell us everything slowly, what happened?”

...

A few minutes later, after listening to Takeuchi Yoko, Chen Xiaolian and his team finally understood what the 'instance dungeon storyline' was.

After gaining an understanding of the instance dungeon storyline, Roddy could not help himself and was the first to sigh. "Does it have to be so outrageous? Is the Development Team not afraid that this will disrupt the balance of this world? To think they would come up with such a terrible kind of technology."

Nicole coolly replied. "What is there to be afraid of? Instance dungeon areas will be blocked off from the world outside. This storyline is confined within this instance dungeon area and time. Once this instance dungeon ends, there will be no impact toward the outside world."

...

The general gist of the storyline was as follows:

(This was the storyline within this instance dungeon) The Japanese government had been secretly transferring funds or funding a mysterious research institute.

This research institute was dedicated to the research of some powerful military technology. After a considerable period of research, the members of this research gradually divided into two factions.

One of the factions prioritized research of living beings and they set up a research project named 'Super Bio-transformed Warrior'. The main objective of this project was to research and develop the innate potential within humans. However, after years of research, a change occurred!

After researching other life forms, animals and even insects, this faction believed that enhancing the special characteristics of these life forms and conducting further research on them would net results that could be used in the military field. They would be able to create a battle strength that far surpasses an ordinary 'bio-transformed warrior'.

In other words, this faction believed that creating those powerful

‘monsters’ with battle strength surpassing a bio-transformed warrior would give more value for the military.

This faction was named ‘Bio-transformation Faction’.

The other faction from the research institute believed that all individual life forms were insignificant. No matter how much the flesh was strengthened, there will always be a limit. Thus, they followed the ‘orthodox’ path of technological research, believing that the ultimate goal should be to create the most powerful technological weaponry.

This faction was named ‘Mechanical Faction’.

Although the Bio-transformation Faction and Mechanical Faction were both part of this research institute, the differing direction taken by their research would often lead to disputes and competition. Most importantly, in their competition to gain more allocated resources and funding for their research, the two sides would often bicker without respite.

From a general perspective, the Bio-transformation Faction’s research direction was too ‘heavy’, leading to upper management feeling somewhat freaked out. Moreover, many of their research contents were those that could not be publicized and would be considered as a violation of human ethics by most people.

One such example was the synthesis of genes from various different life forms: animals, insects and humans to create a ‘monster’.

Once such actions were exposed, most of the community will lash out at them.

Thus, their field of research gradually became narrower due to the decreased amount of funding and resources by upper management.

The Mechanical Faction on the other hand, had always been the main research direction advocated by the upper management.

After all, the research and development of electronics and mechanical types of military weaponry was more in keeping with the orthodox way of thought. Even when revealed, the public would not criticize them much.

In recent years, the Mechanical Faction had managed to achieve a great success while the Bio-transformation Faction also managed to achieve a massive breakthrough.

However, at this time when both factions had attained success, the upper management felt that, due to the limited amount of resources and funding, they would have to weigh their options and continue to support only one of the two factions. The other faction would then have to face the predicament of a reduced research funding.

Thus... the Bio-transformation Faction made a dangerous decision!

Generally speaking, those researchers from the Bio-transformation Faction were all slightly mad. Furthermore, these mad men possessed a rather perverted mind-set.

Just think about it, would there be a normal person who could conduct experiments to transform a human into a monster every day?

People such as these have almost no morals under human standards and would not care about matters such as ethics and morals.

Thus, those mad men made an insane move.

...

“You mean... these bastards, in order to have the upper management recognize and value the fruits of their research...they lost their sense of reasoning and unleashed their research product, a genetic virus that triggers monster transformations through the underground drainage channel? They unleashed it throughout all of Tokyo?”

Chen Xiaolian sucked in a breath of cold air.

There were 20 million people in Tokyo City! If you factor in the other people in the surrounding vicinity of Tokyo City... the number would certainly exceed 40 million!

Against 40 million people... these were fellow citizens! They unleashed a genetic virus upon them to transform them into monsters!

Using this method to place pressure upon the upper management and

at the same time, show off how incredible the fruits of their research were...

Such a kind of move was certainly an act by those who had lost their reasoning!

...

On the surface, Takeuchi Yoko, Takeuchi Mikiko's mother held the identity of an ordinary inventory administrator of a large company.

However, this was just a cover.

She was in fact a member of this research institute. Naturally, she was not one of the core researchers. More accurately, she was simply an administrative assistant to one of the core researchers from the 'Mechanical Faction'. Her work resembled those of secretaries and she has had no hand in the research process.

Next, an even more outrageous storyline happened.

Takeuchi Yoko was widowed early on and had been single since then. Due to the need to conceal her identity within this mysterious research institute, it was only normal for her to not have much when it comes to social circles.

In the past two years, she got close to one of her colleagues within the research institute. That person was none other than Domoto.

Domoto held the identity of an assistant researcher from the 'Bio-transformation Faction' and could be considered one of the formal researchers.

Within the research institute, the level of their identity was something of significance. Researchers were undoubtedly part of the important class of people. As for an administrative staff member such as Takeuchi Yoko, she was only there to help with the affairs of the researchers.

Yoko still had a lingering charm to her, and under the constant pursuit of Domoto, she felt flattered. Over time, she secretly began a relationship with Domoto.

Here was where the instance dungeon's storyline took a nosedive.

In fact, Domoto had an ulterior motive for approaching Takeuchi Yoko. He hoped to subvert Takeuchi Yoko who was an administrative secretary from the Mechanical Faction. After having entered a relationship with Takeuchi Yoko, Domoto persuaded Takeuchi Yoko to do something for him: Use Takeuchi Yoko's work authority to help him steal some secrets from the Mechanical Faction.

...

"He gave me a special monitoring device and had me help him bring it into the research institute. I will then secretly smuggle the monitoring device out and give it to Domoto on a regular basis," Tears flowed down Takeuchi Yoko's face as she continued. "But recently, in order to compete with the Mechanical Faction, they stopped caring about anything else. In order to defeat the Mechanical Faction, they even wanted to destroy the research results obtained by the Mechanical Faction. Such a despicable action was unacceptable. Thus, I rejected Domoto's unreasonable request."

...

Subsequently, things escalated.

The Bio-transformation Faction unleashed the genetic virus through the underground drainage channel, spreading it through all of Tokyo City.

Originally, the Bio-transformation Faction had only intended to use this incident to flex their muscles for the upper management to see, showing off the power of their research – their original intent was to send someone to clear the virus once the leak caused a minor impact. Next, sacrifice a few researchers as scapegoats. That way, they would be able to avoid being held accountable. At the same time, they would be able to impress upon the upper management just how powerful their terrifying research was.

Most unfortunately, a variable appeared in the middle of their plans.

The staff members sent to clear the virus in Tokyo reported back...

...

“A mutation occurred within the virus,” Takeuchi Yoko closed her eyes in sorrow. “After the virus fused into the human body, an unexpected mutation occurred, one that far exceeded the previous experiment’s conclusive data. Additionally, this mutation had never happened before in the previous human experiments. After the Bio-transformation Faction found out that they have lost control of the situation, they began to go utterly mad!

“They attempted to destroy all incriminating evidences; all the experimental evidences were thoroughly destroyed. In order to ensure their own safety, they also did not hesitate to destroy the research data on their successful experiments on some viruses.

“They even made an insane move. They attempted to undermine the research results of the Mechanical Faction. They wanted to use this method to try to obtain victory amidst defeat.

“Those mad men thought: As long as the Mechanical Faction’s results are destroyed, even if the upper management find out about them being the one to spread the virus, they would have no choice but to forgive them and continue supporting them.

“They... they actually slipped the genetic virus into the Mechanical Faction’s research area! They were madly attempting to destroy their competitors!”

...

Hearing all that, Chen Xiaolian and his team were utterly dumbfounded!

These people are truly worthy of the name mad scientists! Mad scientists!

“Presently, the entire lab area of the Mechanical Faction has been exposed to the genetic virus. Domoto caught me because he wanted to torture out a secret that I had hidden away. Back then, the monitoring device that they gave me had managed to gather information on an

extremely secretive detail.”

“What detail?”

“Self-destruct password!” Takeuchi Yoko cried out. “This research and development facility is located underground. Additionally, the successful research results of the Mechanical Faction are all hidden in a secret underground warehouse. However, in order to ensure that the secret will not be leaked to the outside, all warehouses have a self-destruct device affixed onto them. Once an invasion occurs or in case of an emergency, they can activate the self-destruct devices and destroy all the research results! This is to ensure that it does not get leaked or fall into the hands of outsiders.

“Back then, the monitoring devices managed to obtain the self-destruct password for those self-destruct devices. However...”

After saying that, Takeuchi Yoko took a deep breath. “However, I had already found out about Domoto’s evil deeds. Thus, I had extracted the memory card from the monitoring device and hid it away! I absolutely cannot allow the selfishness of these bastards to lead to the destruction of the research institute’s inventions!”

...

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy turned to look at each other. Roddy was unable to restrain himself and he exhaled. “What an outrageous storyline!”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

“At present, the lab area of the Mechanical Faction has already been destroyed. These bastards had slipped in the genetic virus, infecting many of the researchers and transforming them into monsters!” Takeuchi Yoko spoke with a quavering voice. “If not because Domoto had wanted to obtain the monitoring device’s memory card from me, I fear I would have died! He brought me out, but... but I will never allow him to succeed! Even though the lab has been destroyed, as long as the research results are preserved, that would mean that they are unable to succeed in getting their goal.”

“The research results are stored in a warehouse located underground. In order to get there, you must first go to the Control Centre within the laboratory. From there, ride the transit elevator.”

“Wait,” Chen Xiaolian suddenly gave a frown and looked around at his team members around him. He wondered. “How does this matter relate to us? The research results of the so-called Mechanical Faction, how does that relate to us? As for the self-destruct password, that too does not seem to have any connection with us.”

It was then...

[System prompt!].

“Damn!” Chen Xiaolian was shocked as a new notification suddenly appeared from the system!

[System prompt: Your guild has successfully completed the second phase of the quest, that is to safely escort the quest target to the designated location. You have acquired the trust of the storyline character, Takeuchi Yoko and she has given you the details of the storyline. Third phase of the quest successfully activated!]

[Opening the third phase of the quest!]

[The third phase of the quest:

A. Within the set time, seize the Mechanical / Bio-transformation Faction’s research results. (You may choose any one. Completion of any one of them would comply with the required standard for quest completion. If you could complete both, you will obtain additional reward from the system.)

B. Within the set time, if the quest could not be completed or if the participating team or solo participant dies, they would be deemed to have failed the quest.

C. Quest failure will lead to system punishment.

D. The set time for the third phase of the quest: 48 hours. Countdown begins now.

E. Participants that have yet to complete the second phase of the quest must complete it within 8 hours. Otherwise, they will be deemed to have failed the quest and be teleported out of this instance dungeon!].

“Holy shit!” Chen Xiaolian’s face sank.

...

On the highway, Tian Lie who was lashing out at the monsters with a steel whip while situated atop the carriage suddenly saw the system notification.

“The third phase has been opened?” Tian Lie’s face distorted. Then, he sneered. “This little angel is quite fast.”

He abruptly lashed out viciously with the steel whip and roared. “Run! Bastards!”

...

“Head back, head back. It seems someone had pulled far ahead of us. Whatever we do at this moment would be futile.”

Culkin looked at the system prompt he received with a cold expression: [Third phase of the quest has opened].

He suddenly let out a faint sigh and picked up his headset.

“I have decided. We will abandon the third phase of the quest. Everyone stay at your current location and rest up. In eight hours’ time, we will leave this instance dungeon.”

Chapter 140: Splitting Again

There were two choices placed before Meteor Rock Guild!

“We can choose one of two quests, seize the research results of the Mechanical Faction or seize the research results of the Bio-transformation Faction,” Chen Xiaolian said. “Of course, if we can complete both, we will acquire an additional reward from the system.”

Seeing his team members looking at him, Chen Xiaolian felt stressed. He took a deep breath and used his fingers to knead the area between his eyebrows. He felt a headache and said slowly. “Our current advantages and disadvantages are as follows: If we select the Mechanical Faction, we have Takeuchi Mikiko’s mother, Takeuchi Yoko. She is a staff member from the Mechanical Faction and is familiar with the surroundings within. We can obtain some information regarding the interior of the Mechanical Faction through her. After that, enter the lab area of the Mechanical Faction... however, there are dangers. Due to the underhanded move by the Bio-transformation Faction of slipping in their genetic virus, the researchers within the Mechanical Faction’s lab may have already been transformed into monsters.

“In other words, we will have to enter a closed space filled with various monsters.”

The others remained silent.

Chen Xiaolian then continued. “If we choose the Bio-transformation Faction, we have the one known as Domoto. That fellow is a member of the Bio-transformation Faction. We can interrogate the inside situation of the Bio-transformation Faction from him. The disadvantage of this choice is... unknown dangers! We are unable to ascertain what the situation might be within their lab and how high the risk factor may be. All of these cannot be controlled. According to Domoto, each laboratory will have a permanently stationed elite armed security forces.”

“If it is just some armed security personnel, I feel that it should not prove too difficult. Back in Tokyo, we had charged in through the

Metropolitan Police Department and fought against their Special Assault Teams,” Lun Tai interjected while making a face.

“Makes sense,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “Now, everyone can express their views regarding this choice.”

“Why not take both?” Nicole spoke up.

Slowly and calmly, she said. “We currently have an advantage that the other participants do not. And that is time!”

Nicole turned to the others. “The last notification issued by the system is: Participants that have yet to complete the second phase of the quest must complete it within 8 hours. Otherwise, they will be deemed to have failed the quest and be teleported out of this instance dungeon!”

Nicole continued while looking at the others. “In my understanding of the system, the numbers given by the system is often provided after going through a reasonable set of calculations. In other words, for the system to give the other participants 8 hours of time would mean that the lead we have over the other participants is at least 8 hours! They still need around 8 hours in order to complete the second phase. Within this time period, we will not be facing any competition from them. So, why not think of methods to maximize the benefits from this?”

“Wouldn’t that be too risky?” Qiao Qiao frowned. “After all, our guild is a small one with limited strength.”

“This is indeed a risky move. However, if this move succeeds... from my understanding of the system, the ‘additional reward’ given by the system is usually very generous!” Nicole remained unyielding toward her opinion.

“Oh?” Chen Xiaolian’s interest was piqued and he looked at Nicole.

Nicole quickly continued. “There are usually a few rules to the rewards given by the system. Within instance dungeon quests of the competitive type, the rules to the rewards are particularly notable.

“First, we can through analysis, see that there are two final quests for this instance dungeon: Mechanical Faction and Bio-transformation Faction. In other words, there would be at best only two winning parties.

There can be no more than that! The possibility here is that the winning party completes both quests.

“Either that, or for two parties to complete one quest each!

“That is to say, the reward given by the system actually has a fixed value. This fixed value is either exclusive or will be split into two.

“You need to understand this. There are in fact some loopholes within the system, especially in the area of certain calculations. It is rigid and inflexible.

“Also, based on my experience, this competitive type of instance dungeon will generally have two calculation specifications when calculating for the final reward.

“First, how the quest is completed.

“Second, the number of teams to complete the quest.

“I will not elaborate on the first condition, you should understand just by hearing about it.

“The second one is more subtle! Moreover, many may not understand this hidden rule. What I want to say is: if we could make it so that we become the only party to complete this instance dungeon’s quest, then... even if we only manage to complete one of the two quests, as long as we see to it that we are the only ones to emerge as the winner, there is a high probability that the reward received will far exceed our expectations!

“That is to say, by taking this instance dungeon as an example, the final classification for the reward is as follows:

“First Class reward, one party becomes the only winner and completes the two quests.

“Second Class reward, one party becomes the only winner by only completing one quest.

“Third Class reward, two winning parties whom each completed one of the two quests.”

“There is actually something like this?” Chen Xiaolian was slightly

surprised.

Thus, I believe that we may be able to make some changes to our plans,” Nicole’s eyes flashed.

...

“Act separately?”

After listening to Nicole’s plan, the other members were somewhat shocked.

“Yes. The first group will proceed with the objective of seizing the research results of the Bio-transformation Faction. I believe there is no need for me to elaborate on this point for everyone to understand.

“Most importantly however, is the second group. The second group is to enter the Mechanical Faction’s lab area with the objective of seizing the research results of the Mechanical Faction!

“If this objective cannot be completed, then proceed to the secondary objective... destroy the research results of the Mechanical Faction! That is to ensure that our team becomes the only team to complete this instance dungeon’s quest. That way, we will maximize the system reward that we will acquire!

“We have an advantage on our side. The memory card that Takeuchi Yoko hid away contains the self-destruct password for the control centre of the Mechanical Faction! If we are unable to seize the research results, then utilize the self-destruct password in the control room to trigger the destruction of the Mechanical Faction’s invention!”

Vicious!

After Nicole outlined her plan, that was the first word to emerge from Chen Xiaolian’s mind.

As expected from a battle hardened Floating Angel; she possessed a rich amount of combat experience and could take such decisive actions!

“Splitting up is indeed dangerous. However, we presently have the lead in this phase. Within this period of time where there are no competition,

the risk will be worth it. Once we succeed, the reward will be worth the risk. Besides, this game has always been one filled with risks. Less risk or more is nothing much, in my opinion,” Nicole exhibited a high amount of confidence – clearly, now that her pet Floater has finished recharging, this Floating Angel’s confidence has increased.

“We still need to split into a primary and secondary group,” After pondering about it, Chen Xiaolian made his decision. “We must ensure the successful completion of the quest to seize the research results of the Bio-transformation Faction! As for the second group, it will simply be an extra harvest type. If they could complete it, that would be for the best. But even if they fail, it will not affect the final result. Our resources are limited and we cannot evenly split our battle strength. Otherwise, we might end up with nothing in the end.”

“I agree,” As a veteran, Lun Tai immediately showed his support.. He turned to Chen Xiaolian and gave a bitter smile. “The calculation rules for system reward that Nicole mentioned is something I do not know of... as you know, even though I am a veteran, the chances for victory have always been slim. In many cases, my previous guild all place survival as the first priority. Only ever victorious guilds like the Floating Angel would be able to understand the conditions for victory.”

“If there is no objection, then we will be splitting up!” Chen Xiaolian thus decided to split the team.

However, the member allocation for the two groups caused everyone to be surprised!

“The first choice for the group member that will enter the Mechanical Faction’s lab area is Roddy! Roddy’s skill is Mechanical Heart. Obviously, within the Mechanical Faction’s lab area, his skill will have a high probability of being useful,” Chen Xiaolian softly continued.

“Additionally, I will be going with Roddy to enter the Mechanical Faction together. As for the rest... all of you will be in the same group. Enter the Bio-transformation Faction’s lab area and seize the Bio-transformation’s research results to complete the quest!”

“What?”

Hearing Chen Xiaolian’s allocation for the two groups, Qiao Qiao went pale. “Xiaolian, you...”

Chen Xiaolian was clear on what Qiao Qiao meant. She felt that Chen Xiaolian should be going together with them. He was the Guild Leader, after all. Additionally... there was a deeper feeling between them. She felt that it would be best if Chen Xiaolian were to go together with her and Soo Soo. After all, they have the more intimate relationship.

At the moment however, Chen Xiaolian had a different idea.

The earlier argument within the motel has had an impact on Chen Xiaolian’s thoughts.

He too, felt that being too emotional was something that should be avoided in many cases.

Take this allocation of group members as an example, if he had insisted on putting himself, Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo and Roddy together... it was clear that the allocation of group members could not be done in a balanced manner!

Additionally, if he were to constantly place only these four people with the best relationship together, the small, intimate clique situation would grow more serious through time! Should this happen, Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Xia Xiaolei would surely feel excluded.

“Seizing the Bio-transformation Faction’s research results must be prioritized in order to ensure that we complete the quest. We must concentrate our forces in that direction. At the current, Nicole is the strongest powerhouse within our team. Naturally, the strongest powerhouse must be placed in the group sent to ensure quest completion!”

No one objected this line of reasoning. Even Nicole herself displayed her tacit understanding toward that reasoning.

There was no need to explain the decision with Lun Tai and Bei Tai. As veterans, they were the backbone of their team. It was only natural for

them to be in the group sent to complete the quest.

As for Qiao Qiao...

Chen Xiaolian had to put more consideration in this decision.

If Qiao Qiao were to follow him, what about Soo Soo? Would Qiao Qiao be at ease with leaving Soo Soo with others? Most certainly not!

As such, they would form a small clique made of four again. Then, Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Nicole, the three of them would be excluded as 'outsiders'.

What would they think? What would Xia Xiaolei think?

Chen Xiaolian had another, more deeper reason for this move of his: At present, the level of difficulty for the Bio-transformation Faction's research results appeared to be lower. With the strength of only those armed security personnel, the enemies they face would likely be no different from the Special Assault Team. Even if the enemies were somewhat stronger, their group has a Floating Angel amongst them. Let alone a group of armed men, even if a Thunderstorm Tank were to appear, it still would not be a problem!

Chapter 141: Deep Underground

Since it was the quest with the lesser risk, Chen Xiaolian could not help but be selfish and send the two sisters, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo into the group that faced fewer risks.

Although this act of selfishness was not a righteous action, Chen Xiaolian was a human after all. There was no way for him to avoid something like this.

As for the other group consisting of him and Roddy, he had little expectations for this group.

This was simply an attempt at an additional accomplishment. If they can accomplish it, then they should do it. If they cannot, then they'll simply withdraw! If it came down to it, they'll just run back in retreat!

If I obtain it, then such is my fortune. If I do not obtain it, then such is my fate.

As such, there is no need to put too much into it.

Roddy's Mechanical Heart was most suited to this. However, Chen Xiaolian could not possibly send Roddy alone to face the lab filled with monsters.

So, as a good brother, Chen Xiaolian decided to accompany Roddy on this trip.

It was enough with the two of them. Any more would be a waste.

...

"It is decided!" Chen Xiaolian directly exercised his authority as the Guild Leader.

Qiao Qiao had a complicated expression on her face. However, she remained silent... she was clear that it was necessary for her to help maintain Chen Xiaolian's authority as the Guild Leader and as such, she did not continue disputing the matter.

Nicole glanced at Chen Xiaolian and deliberately let out a smile. "Could

you be at ease by letting me lead your girlfriend?”

“You are my team member, it is only natural that I trust you,” Chen Xiaolian replied softly. “We all share the same goal of completing the quest and survive through this instance dungeon. Thus, I believe that you will certainly do your best without holding back.”

“Since you’ve said that, I assure you,” Nicole smiled. “I will do my best to protect your little girlfriend... even though we do not get along, just consider it as me returning the favour to you.”

“... thank you!” Chen Xiaolian said with utter sincerity. He was clear that with such a powerful Floating Angel making the assurance, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo would most likely be safe.

“Now, begin setting up,” Chen Xiaolian glanced at the others. “We still have the walkie-talkies amongst our equipment. Take it out and distribute one for each. Everyone adjust the frequency properly so that we will be able to keep in touch.”

...

The lab areas of the Bio-transformation Faction and the Mechanical Faction were located in different spots. One to the left and one to the right. According to Takeuchi Yoko, the respective entrances to the two lab areas were located at the two sides of the passageway. On each side, there would be an elevator capable of going down. After that, they could take a ride on an underground rail car to reach their respective destinations.

Both Takeuchi Yoko and Domoto have their identity cards with them. By using their identity cards, their group could enter the respective lab area’s elevator. They could also ride on the rail car and bypass the security system.

As for Takeuchi Yoko, Takeuchi Mikiko and Domoto, Chen Xiaolian’s team decided to not bring them together.

After all, they were ordinary people. Bringing them together would be the equivalent of having an extra burden.

Takeuchi Yoko had also given them an important information.

She had hidden the memory card that contained the self-destruct password in one of the toilet tanks in the laboratory area.

This piece of information made Chen Xiaolian speechless... this woman's idea for a hiding place was not creative at all.

Not that it mattered. Since they still had to enter the Mechanical Faction's lab area, they would just go search for the self-destruct password after entering.

There was also a special person, whom Chen Xiaolian had decided to make into a 'recyclable trash'.

It was none other than Nagase Komi.

This person had belonged to Culkin's guild. However, after being captured by them, this girl no longer has any other choice.

"Choose. You can leave this place alone right now and face two possibilities. The first is to be killed by some monsters... there are probably many monsters outside right now. The second possibility is that you are lucky enough to survive this instance dungeon only to fail the quest. You will then face system punishment. After that, a weak little chicken like you would be thrown into the punishment instance dungeon. When that happens, you will also die," Chen Xiaolian looked at the girl. "Or, you can choose to leave Culkin's guild and join my guild. By doing so, you will have a chance to complete this instance dungeon together with us. As one of the winners, you will be able to survive through this instance dungeon! Make your choice."

Nagase Komi did not hesitate and chose to join Chen Xiaolian's guild.

Naturally, she was assigned by Chen Xiaolian into the same group as him and Roddy, the one that will be entering the Mechanical Faction's lab area. Although the girl was unwilling, she did not have any choice in the matter.

Chen Xiaolian may be a little soft-hearted, but he will never forget the mine that she had set up under the tile back in the rest stop!

He would never be merciful against someone who had once wanted to

kill him.

Naturally, if Nagase Komi's subsequent performance was passable, he did not mind allowing her to leave this instance dungeon alive. After leaving this instance dungeon, he would immediately have this girl leave his guild. They would owe each other nothing.

The two Takeuchis, the mother, daughter and also Domoto were left behind in an equipment room by the passageway. The room was not very big, but the walls of the room were very strong. Furthermore, they also have a communication device with them.

Chen Xiaolian left a gun and a magazine of bullets for the mother-daughter pair. He also had Domoto's hands and legs cuffed. As for how the mother-daughter pair intended to handle Domoto, that was not Chen Xiaolian's problem.

Whether or not the mother-daughter pair would report this matter to the police was also something that Chen Xiaolian did not care about. It would take a very long time for the police or army to reach this place. By the time they did, Chen Xiaolian would have run off. Besides... the instance dungeon area would be cut off from the rest of the outside world. There was no way for her to contact the outside world. The most she could do was contact Tokyo.

Truth be told, Chen Xiaolian was embarrassed to face Takeuchi Yoko.

This woman was trying to protect the research results of the Mechanical Faction. However, they tricked her into trusting them and giving them the self-destruct password.

Chen Xiaolian's objective was to destroy the Mechanical Faction's research results if he was unable to obtain it himself!

No matter what, if this woman were to find out about this, she would be very furious.

...

"From now on, we will begin to act separately. Remember to keep in touch using the walkie-talkie at all times. In the case where contact is not

possible... proceed according to the predetermined schedule. No matter what happens, remember... in the case where completing the quest becomes impossible, prioritize survival! Preserving our lives comes first! Even if it means entering the punishment instance dungeon, that would still be better than dying on the spot! By staying alive, we will have a chance for survival.”

After Chen Xiaolian finished instructing them, the two groups separated. When the time came for them to part, Qiao Qiao directed a deep look at Chen Xiaolian. “This time, when we return, I will...”

“Hey!” Chen Xiaolian quickly moved to cover her mouth and forced out a smile. “Have you never watched movies or tv series? Saying things like this will raise that FLAG [1]. That is an inauspicious thing, you know?”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian pinched Qiao Qiao’s nose. Then, he turned around and moved toward the other elevator. Roddy and Nagase Komi followed him through the passageway.

...

Ding!

The elevator doors stopped descending. Following a clear sound, the doors of the elevator slowly opened.

After going down using the elevator, they no longer knew how deep down they had descended. Chen Xiaolian judged that this place was certainly over 50 meters below ground!

Although the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel was said to be 50 meters underground, the depth of this place had far exceeded that.

Outside the elevator was a place that resembled a small subway station.

Before them was an underground rail. Resting on the rails was a circular shaped carriage that was flat on both sides. The head of the carriage and the body formed a shuttle shape. Soft white lights were fixed onto the ceiling of the platform. There was also a melodious and soft music playing within.

“The Japanese are quite particular about their work environment,” Chen Xiaolian smiled.

Soon however, he would lose the smile on his face.

Using Takeuchi Yoko’s identity card, the doors to the shuttle shaped rail car opened. A pungent stench of blood abruptly assailed them!

Upon the ground were plenty of bloodstains. There were also marks revealing that some people had been dragged through the area!

The most horrifying part was the several deep slashes left on the walls of the rail car.

It appeared as though a sharp weapon had been used to slash across the metal walls of the rail car, leaving several deep slashes upon it!

“Could it be that Wolverine has entered the scene?” Roddy the chuunibyou cracked a joke in an attempt to lighten the atmosphere.

The doors to the rail car slowly closed up. Next, an electronic voice prompted out in Japanese, prompting the passengers to be seated, wear their safety belts and others of the like.

The rail car issued buzzing sounds. Then, with a slight start, it slowly moved.

A few seconds later, the rail car suddenly sped up!

“It doesn’t appear to be descending... it is moving on flat surface?” Roddy sensed the angle of movement followed by the rail car and knitted his eyebrows. “It’s moving out at such a fast speed... we will be leaving Saitama Prefecture soon, right? Japan is not that big of a place.”

“Who cares,” Chen Xiaolian examined his weapon and inserted a magazine upon his tactical vest. “Do you have a cigarette?”

“No, it is with Lun Tai,” Roddy rolled his eyes. “You nervous?”

“Nonsense, we are going to be risking our life right now. Anyone who doesn’t feel nervous is a little bitch,” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. “If we can complete the quest, then we’ll complete it. If we cannot complete it, think of a method to run away. If we cannot run away, think

of a method to hide. At any rate, preserving our lives comes first.”

He then turned to the side to look at the pale and shivering Nagase Komi. Chen Xiaolian sighed and was about to say something...

Suddenly, he heard a soft and peculiar sound coming from the outside of the rail car!

Although the sound was faint, both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy heard it! Both their faces turned tense.

Then... the sound came again!

Crunch!

It sounded like the sound of metal being twisted.

Both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy abruptly stood up. They arched their waist in a stooped forward posture with their guns raised.

“What is going on?” Nagase Komi’s face turned paler and she raised the PS9 in her hand. Chen Xiaolian had given that gun to her.

“Do not point the gun muzzle at your own people!” Roddy quickly pressed down the girl’s hand and whispered. “Remember to open the safety catch before you shoot. Shh! Listen!”

Crunch!

Crunch!

Crunch! !

Three sounds came consecutively from the outside of the rail car! From the sound, it was clear that the source was still moving!

From the left position of the rail car’s head, it had moved until it reached the right side of the rail car. It was as though something was moving diagonally on top of the rail car.

Chen Xiaolian’s face suddenly distorted as he thought of one thing!

He abruptly pointed at the slash marks on the walls.

“Son of a bitch! I got careless!” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “Since there

are claw marks here... then... it is apparent that someone in the rail car had transformed into a monster! However... when we entered... where was the monster?"

"You mean..." Roddy swallowed his saliva and pointed to the top of the rail car.

—

1 Death flag. In movies and tv series, once this is triggered by way of character development or lines, it is only a matter of time before that person dies.

Chapter 142: Enter

“F**k!” Chen Xiaolian swore and led Roddy together with him. They crouched down and listened attentively to the sound coming out from outside the rail car.

“The left side of the front...” Roddy said in a whisper and he pointed out in the direction. Chen Xiaolian whispered back. “Concentrate our fire on it!”

At that moment, a loud bang erupted and a window on the right side suddenly shattered! A black silhouette smashed through the window and broke into the interior of the rail car!

Chen Xiaolian was quick to react and he instantly pushed Nagase Komi down. The girl fell to the side. As she fell, the charging black silhouette, aimed at the Japanese girl’s shoulder viciously smashed into one of the passenger seats!

The metal frame of the passenger seat became a deformed mess, resembling a roll of noodles.

The black silhouette darted backward right after making the attack and immediately shot back out through the window.

Bang bang bang bang!

Roddy pulled out his handgun and shot out continuously. The bullets fired out struck the walls and ceiling of the rail car, creating a series of sparks. Even though he did not possess a high level of marksmanship, it was clear that some of the bullets had struck the black coloured silhouette. However, it had shown no reaction at all!

“What is that thing?” Roddy exclaimed. Chen Xiaolian rushed toward the window, aimed his MP5 at the roof top area of the rail car and pulled the trigger. The “tat tat tat tat tat” sounds of bullets being fired echoed out and they heard something moving rapidly across the roof top of the rail car. The crunching sounds of metal being twisted rang out continuously.

“Be careful of its charge!”

Chen Xiaolian pulled Roddy to a corner. Just as he was about to go pull Nagase Komi, another booming sound erupted and a piece of the metal part of the rail car’s ceiling was torn off! A huge chunk of it collapsed down!

Atop the roof top, a monster with a black coloured body was crouching down. It opened its huge, bloody mouth and directed a loud roar into the rail car. Its crimson tongue and white fangs created a striking contrast with each other.

“Roar your sister!” Chen Xiaolian raised his hand and unleashed a hail of bullets at it. However, the monster abruptly snapped its mouth shut. The incoming bullets then struck the surface of its head and were bounced off!

“Nagase Komi! Hurry up and get over here!” Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly at the Japanese girl. However, the Japanese girl had been terrified senseless and could only scream out sharply as she lay on the floor, not moving at all. It was as though she was unwilling to leave the passenger seat beside her.

Chen Xiaolian attempted to go pull her. Unfortunately, before he could do so, the doors of the rail car beside were forced open by an immense force.

A thin, black silhouette charged inside, sending the doors flying at the same time. Coincidentally, the door slammed onto Chen Xiaolian’s body and he was sent flying to the side as well. The heavy metal door fell upon Chen Xiaolian’s body and he felt something gush into his mouth before spitting out a mouthful of blood.

Roddy howled loudly and emptied an entire magazine of bullets of his handgun onto it. Then, he raised his rifle.

His rifle of choice was a sniper rifle. Although it was unable to fire out repeatedly, it was now capable of firing out three bullets in quick succession toward the monster!

The high velocity of the sniper rifle's bullets allowed it to instantly pierce through the monster's body, causing a flower of blood to bloom out!

The monster screamed out in pain and suddenly turned its body around. It rapidly crawled toward the side of the rail car!

At that moment, everyone within the rail car was able to make out the monster's appearance.

That thing... appeared like a giant lizard.

To be more accurate, it looked more like a crocodile!

Only, its tail was much longer. The monster sported a thick tail that was over ten meters in length. Back then, this monster had used the might of this tail to shatter the window and attack them.

It was apparent that this monster's IQ was not low. It knew how to utilize feint attacks. It had crawled on top, tearing out the rooftop and letting out a roar to catch their attention while utilizing its tail to slam open the door and attack those inside.

"Xiaolian!" Roddy exerted his strength to shove away the metal door pressing down on Chen Xiaolian. After getting up, Chen Xiaolian said. "That thing's skin is too thick! Bullets cannot pierce through it!"

"Sniper rifle can barely do the job. But, the rate of lethality is too low," Roddy exhaled.

"Garfield!" Chen Xiaolian shouted. A beam of light shone out and three Four-Eyed War Cats appeared beside him.

All three Garfields issued out a roar.

"Do not go out first!" Chen Xiaolian stood up and spat out the blood from his mouth. "That thing is a reptile. Lure it into the car first!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian pulled the safety lever on his MP5 submachine gun and delivered a barrage of bullets at the ceiling.

Tat tat tat tat tat

Soon, the roof of the rail car was filled with holes. The monster outside rapidly crawled about and its claw marks upon the rail car could be seen.

Finally, Chen Xiaolian shouted. "On the right!"

From the gap left upon the broken door, a black shadow abruptly charged inside!

Chen Xiaolian grabbed the deformed metal door and smashed heavily forward! The monster's head charged inside, only to be greeted by the incoming door. The resulting impact disoriented it, leaving it open for an instant. In that instant, the three Garfields pounced onto the monster!

The monster's body was bigger than Garfield, its skin was as tough as an alligator's and it gave off the feeling of leathery toughness.

Garfield pounced on it and his sharp claws and fangs descended onto the monster's body! Garfield's [A-] Class strength was able to inflict damage on the monster!

Chi chi!

Under Garfield's treatment of claws and fangs, the tough, leathery skin on the monster's body was rent and blood spurt out.

However, the monster's strength was astonishing. It ruthlessly slammed one of the Garfield doppelganger aside and leapt toward Chen Xiaolian and Roddy!

Chen Xiaolian was prepared for this. He pushed Roddy aside while he too, dodged to the other side.

With a booming sound, the monster's head smashed and battered two metal passenger seats. By then, Chen Xiaolian was already holding onto Bone Crusher Axe. He howled and cleaved down with the axe!

Head Cleaver!

The monster was in the midst of lifting its head up, only to have the axe strike its head, slamming it back down and into the floor!

The metal floor was instantly deformed.

Chen Xiaolian was disappointed to find that the sharp Bone Crusher Axe was incapable of cleaving apart the monster's head. Rather, it did not even break its outer skin!

Instantly, Chen Xiaolian grasped the source of the problem.

He was lacking in battle strength!

Bone Crusher Axe was a [B] Class weapon. His Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes was also a [B] Class martial skill.

Clearly, as the battles became more intense, his enhanced body, weapon and skill of the [B] Class were gradually becoming more inadequate for his demands.

The monster was slammed down onto the floor purely due to the knockback power of his strike. There was no damage done to the monster at all.

The monster turned around and got up. It rapidly slammed its head against Chen Xiaolian's axe!

Chen Xiaolian was just about to utilize the second move 'Ear Gouger' when the axe was knocked aside by the tremendous force.

Thankfully, at that same moment, Garfield pounced forward. His two frontal paws slapped down heavily onto the monster's head!

With his [A-] Class strength, Garfield caused the monster to shriek out miserably.

Furthermore, the monster's left eye socket was struck by Garfield's [Tiger Rush] skill. Its eye socket cracked under the attack and its eye bulged out partially.

The other Garfield doppelganger savagely bit down onto the monster's tail as the third one lunged onto the monster's back, utilizing both claws and fangs to slash and bite the monster.

The monster issued out successive cries of torment. Unfortunately for the monster, having the three Garfields upon it was the equivalent of having three pets with [A-] Class strength pressing down on it. No matter

how savage the monster may be, it was incapable of going toe to toe against a pet with [A-] strength, much less three!

Garfield was smart. The skin on the monster's back was resilient and powerful. Thus, the three Four-Eyed War Cats came together and flipped the monster, rolling it over to reveal the tender layer of skin on its stomach.

Scaled lines were evident, revealing that this monster possessed some form of reptilian gene.

The three Garfields started splitting the work, one held down the monster's head, one bit onto the tail and the last one on the monster's stomach.

The Garfield holding down the monster's head continuously slapped down onto the monster's head. It was not long before one of the monster's eyeball was rendered a pulpy mess. At the same time, Garfield bit down on the monster's neck and twisted it brutally.

The monster struggled madly with all four limbs. Blood trickled down from Garfield's body as a result of the struggle. However, the ferocious natures of the three Garfields have been stirred!

This was especially true of the Garfield in the middle. His sharp claws unceremoniously slashed apart the monster's belly! Next, using his sharp, curved claws, he pulled out a long, green coloured intestine from the inside of the monster's belly!

This scene of brutality caused the Japanese girl to faint from fear.

Chen Xiaolian rushed forward again. He watched as the three Garfields held down the monster and continued to slap down on the monster with their paws. The skin on the monster's body was rent and flesh was exposed. Even though the monster would not be able to last long, Chen Xiaolian continued to charge forward. He viciously slammed down with Bone Crusher Axe into the monster's belly. Next, he exerted all his might to turn it upside down.

After who knew how long, the monster's struggles finally weakened bit

by bit and it finally stopped moving.

As more and more blood flowed down, the interior of the rail car became inundated by a foul stench.

Finally, Chen Xiaolian plopped down onto the floor as he gasped for breath. Next, the three Garfields too, retreated to his side.

Garfield's injuries were not light. One of the doppelgangers suffered from bloody lacerations and his body was filled with claw marks. Another Garfield suffered injuries on its front paws. The claw marks on it caused one of its muscles to fall out.

Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation to keep Garfield into the system so that he may slowly recover.

Roddy tested the monster by kicking it a few times to ensure that it was thoroughly dead.

At the same time, Roddy made a sickening discovery. Garfield had bitten apart the monster's stomach, causing its contents to spill out. However, the yet to be digested contents that spilled out from the monster's stomach...

There were clearly several mutilated human parts!

"It seems that the passengers within this rail car were eaten by it," Chen Xiaolian observed. "Perhaps one of them transformed into a monster and devoured the rest of them."

"Look, I found this," Roddy suppressed his feeling of nausea and picked up a card that was tied to a cord from the puddle of viscous liquid.

The card was somewhat similar to Takeuchi Yoko's identity card. However, it was clear that the card has a slightly higher level of clearance.

Wiping away the foul viscous liquid on the card, they saw that the card remained undamaged. Who knew what materials were used to make the card; it showed no signs of corrosion at all.

Several words were printed upon the surface of the card: Research

Institute XX Group.

Clearly, this card belonged to one of the researchers. As for the researcher's status, it would certainly be somewhat higher than someone from the administrative personnel like Takeuchi Yoko.

"Keep it, it might prove useful," Chen Xiaolian gestured with his hand.

...

The rail car continued moving forward rapidly.

They continued advancing using the rail car for roughly half an hour.

Chen Xiaolian estimated that this rail car was moving at an extremely high velocity, comparable to a high-speed rail. Its velocity should have reached the 200km per hour threshold!

After spending nearly one whole hour travelling through the rail car, the rail car finally slowed down. It seemed that they were close to their destination...

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy got up at the same time. They first hid in the corner of the rail car as they raised their rifles. Then, they waited carefully as they observed the outside surroundings.

The terminal appeared to be the starting point. It was a narrow subway platform.

However, when the two of them cast their eyes upon the terminal, they could not help but suck in a breath of cold air.

"Holy shit... this... did we arrive in a slaughterhouse?"

On the surface of the platform, several rows of metal seats were placed. However, they were now nothing more than scrap metal as they have been deformed into a variety of shapes!

Most of the warm lighting set onto the ceiling has been broken and some fell onto the floor. What wires remained from them released sparks of fire intermittently.

Sharp claw marks were left on the walls, floors... everywhere! The sight

of those claw marks was shocking!

However, what was more terrifying was the vast amount of blood staining the floor!

The vast amount of blood appeared to have come together to form a pool of blood, most of them having coagulated and turned repulsively black in colour.

The entirety of the platform was filled with a dizzy-inducing pungent smell.

“Get out!”

After observing the platform from inside the rail car for over ten seconds, Chen Xiaolian saw that there were no movements. He then chose to move out from his hiding spot. Then, both him and Roddy emerged from the rail car and jumped onto the platform. Glancing around, Chen Xiaolian frowned after seeing Nagase Komi trembling within the rail car.

The girl was too worthless! As an Awakened, her courage was abysmally small to the point where it made him speechless.

“If you wish to stay here alone, then that’s up to you,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. However, right after he said those words, the girl instantly jumped out with a sharp cry. She ran out of the rail car as she cried miserably. “Don’t leave me! I will follow you!”

...

The platform only has one entrance and exit gate, a metal gate. However, the metal gate had been destroyed, its other half simply left dangling there.

Faint illumination could be seen beyond the gate. However, it was clear that many of the lightings have been destroyed, resulting in a faint illumination even as soft sounds of sparks fell.

Chen Xiaolian thought for a moment and looked at the schematic map that was hung onto the walls beside them. He retrieved his mobile phone

and snapped a picture before staring at the map. Then, he pointed at it. “Our objective is to first find the administrative office that Takeuchi Yoko mentioned. Judging from the map, the distance between Area C and our current location is not too far.”

Roddy frowned. “We are running out of ammunition. I saw a security department on the map. It’s not that far away from Area C. We can go over and try to find some weapons there.”

“En, then let’s go. Roddy, follow me!” Chen Xiaolian said heavily while he hesitated on whether or not he should summon out Garfield.

This time, he had Garfield come out without using the doppelganger skill and had Garfield take the forward position.

The injuries on Garfield have yet to be restored. Thus, Chen Xiaolian gave him a Healing Type Beast Blood before sending him to the vanguard position.

And so, they moved forward with Garfield in front, followed by Chen Xiaolian while Roddy and Nagase Komi walked side by side behind those two. They left the platform and entered a passageway.

...

Chapter 143: Unsafe

The tactical flashlights installed upon their rifles illuminated the road ahead.

The deeper they ventured inside the passageway, the more water they found flowing through the floors. They could only guess where the leak was coming from as puddles of water was formed from the constantly flowing water.

“Why do I smell something strange?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“What I am worried about is that genetic virus. Will we end up contracting it? I do not wish to transform into a monster,” Roddy grimaced.

“Don’t worry. I had already exchanged out All Curing Antidotes from the system,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “Once you sense something amiss, use the antidote immediately. Then, we will turn around and run.”

Chen Xiaolian carefully peered at the path before them and casually asked. “Right, once this instance dungeon is over, Nicole will be withdrawing from our guild. You...”

“What about me?” Roddy shook his head. “The gap between us is too big. I am not a fool. In this game, she is the fair and wealthy miss while I am the loser [1]. An unrealistic notion is something that I should do well to not put too much hopes on.”

“Hmm, since you have that mind-set, I can be at ease,” Chen Xiaolian gave a sigh of relief. “Nicole has a very potent character. I fear you would not be able to hold.”

“Hahahaha...” Roddy narrowed his eyes as he gazed forward and said casually. “I am more interested to see what is inside the Mechanical Faction’s lab. I wonder if there will be any good items. Hmm, it would be for the best if we could find a mechanical pet. You have Garfield, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo have Black Widow. It would be great if I can get my hands on a mechanical type pet. Sigh! If I could only get my hands on a

Floater, that would be amazing!”

“Nonsense. How could a Floater be that easy to get?”

The passageway finally came to an end. They went through an open metal door into an open space.

The area was shaped in what appeared to be an arch. There were air vents and an air circulation system fixed upon the ceiling. Despite being located who knew how many meters underground, this place did not give off any feeling of stuffiness.

“Say, about this underground research lab. Did the Japanese really create this in the present world? Or is this just something that the system made up?” Roddy suddenly asked a very strange question.

The question caught Chen Xiaolian off guard. He tilted his head and pondered it for a while before shaking his head. “Hard to say. Just take that Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel for example. Japan began the construction of that underground drainage system from 1992. They used up to 15 years to complete that colossal underground project. To create an underground lab beneath it within those 15 years would not be too hard, right? However, I am not sure about this black technology [2]. The technological prowess of present day Japan should not be that high, right? If it were, why would they keep kissing America’s ass?”

“Hahahaha,” Roddy laughed.

“Just take that genetic virus for example. If they actually possess this thing, then all they need to do is slip it into a country and turn it upside down. I feel that this should just be a storyline made up by the system. Present day Japan should not be that powerful.”

“Eh? There is something up in front.”

Chen Xiaolian focused his attention forward.

Garfield had already rushed forward. He abruptly stopped before a door and hissed non-stop, his claws scratching the floors over and over. Yet, he was unwilling to leave. Judging from his appearance, it seemed as though

Garfield was nervous.

“Garfield?” Chen Xiaolian ran over and rubbed Garfield’s head.

The injuries on Garfield’s body were rapidly healing up. Under Chen Xiaolian’s comforting strokes, Garfield calmed down somewhat. However, Garfield’s head kept darting toward the door, tapping it gently.

“What’s behind the door?”

Chen Xiaolian raised his head and examined it.

The door was sealed shut. He extended his hand to rap it and was able to sense that it was a very thick door.

However, after rapping it a few times, a “bang” sound rang through from beyond the door! It was as though there was something locked up inside and it was slamming the door!

“Hmm?”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

Next, the sound came again.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The force behind the impact gradually grew stronger and the door was shaken heavily. However, the door was extremely thick and was made of exceptionally durable steel.

“Xiaolian, look here!” Roddy suddenly called out from behind.

There was a room beside them, which resembled a security control room. The door was left open and the people inside had already left, leaving it empty.

Within the control room were row after row of display monitors.

The three of them ran inside and observed the monitors for a while. As they were walking inside from the platform, they had seen surveillance cameras along the way. However, some of the surveillance cameras have been damaged and cracks resembling snowflakes could be seen on the monitor. Most of the surveillance cameras however, were still intact.

“Look here!” Roddy pointed at one of the display monitors.

Shown upon the screen of the monitor was the outer side of the metal door from earlier. The surveillance camera of this monitor was fixed to capture a view of the door.

“Look at the screen on the left!” Roddy pointed at the other display monitor. “This should be the room inside that metal door!”

The surveillance camera was obviously undamaged. However, the room was dark with very faint illumination and appeared vague.

Roddy considered for a moment and quickly moved to check the control panel. “For such a high-tech place, its surveillance cameras should have infrared capabilities... hmm. Got it! Here!”

Roddy found the button to activate the infrared function for the surveillance camera. Then, he pressed it...

Instantly, the view of the interior of the room beyond the metal door was changed to infrared view. After the three of them saw what was inside, they sucked in a breath of cold air in unison!

The room was not big, only around three or five square feet from what they could see. It seemed like a storage room for cleaning equipment.

At this moment, the storage room was playing host to a monster!

Oval shaped head, a pair of pointy ears and a body silhouette that appeared like some form of large animal. It has no hair upon its entire body and has a skin texture that resembled leather. Its four limbs were crawling on the floor. Occasionally, it would become restless, lifting its head and slamming onto the metal door a few times. Then it would furiously slash at the surface of the metal door and the walls with its claws.

The three of them were terrified to see that the monster had managed to produce very deep claw marks upon the metal door. Even the reinforced concrete walls have been rendered a mess. In some areas, some of the reinforcing steels have been exposed.

Clearly, this storage room would not be able to hold the monster for much longer!

The monster possessed the appearance of a big cat... however, its body was longer and especially short.

It resembled a Dachshund dog that had been enlarged a few times. Yet, its head was not a dog's head. Instead, it resembled that of a cat.

"There is a button here!" Roddy pointed at the control panel. "It could probably open the metal door."

Chen Xiaolian only gave it a glance. "Only a mad man would open the door! That thing is even bigger than Garfield, comparable to that monster we encountered in the rail car."

Chen Xiaolian suddenly had an idea. "Right, look at the other screens! Since this is the control room, it should be able to see many of the places inside the lab, right?"

There were over ten display screens stacked densely on the wall; many of them were still on.

Many of the places within the underground lab area were monitored and displayed clearly there.

As the three of them observed the screens of the display monitors, Chen Xiaolian discovered that most of the locations of this lab area were empty. The workspace, corridors and storage rooms were in shambles... every place that the surveillance monitors were able to view was empty, devoid of any human figures or moving objects – with the exception of the monster in the storage room from earlier, no other life forms could be seen.

"Does that mean that it is safe inside?" Nagase Komi suddenly became slightly elated.

"It is not that simple," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "This is the lab area for cutting-edge technology. Not all the places inside will be fixed with surveillance cameras. There will not be any surveillance cameras within the lab that conducts research on cutting-edge technology. What

authority does the security personnel have to monitor those research? Wouldn't leaks in information occur that way? Thus, the surveillance cameras that we can see here are only set up at some areas.

"For those areas of importance, even if they did set up some surveillance cameras, it would not be available for viewing within this normal control room."

"That's true," Roddy nodded his head. "However, we could at least determine which areas are safe and choose the forward direction from the images displayed upon these screens."

Chen Xiaolian pondered and turned his head to look at Nagase Komi. Then, he looked at Roddy. After pondering for a while longer, he said. "I have an idea."

...

Chen Xiaolian's idea was very simple.

Make full use of this control room!

"Presently, it would appear that this control room is monitoring a large part of the lab area. Additionally, these areas are connected. In other words, by utilizing this control room and its encompassing surveillance system, we can designate a safe route of passage. So, I will need one person to stay in this control room and observe the video feeds from the surveillance cameras at all times. Then, relay that information to the one going forward. That way, we will be able to reduce the time taken and avoid much of the dangers. If any monsters happen to be moving, the forward party may not notice. However, the one within this control room could immediately notice the monster by observing these display monitors and then notify the forward party."

Chen Xiaolian's idea was approved by Roddy. "But... who will stay behind?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Nagase Komi before looking at Roddy.

Undoubtedly, from the perspective of value, Nagase Komi was the most useless among them. With her low battle strength, leaving her here to

monitor the situation would be the appropriate choice.

However, there was a problem... both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were unable to trust her!

This girl was too cowardly! Once a dangerous situation arose, chances were she would run away by herself! Who would dare entrust their back to a companion they could not trust?

“You stay behind to monitor, I will go,” Roddy said. “We just need to go find that washroom and get the memory card from within, right? I’ll go!”

“No!” Chen Xiaolian rejected Roddy’s good intention. “It would be best for me to go! The controls here is too complicated and I might not be able to handle it. With your Mechanical Heart, you can control everything here... most importantly, I have Garfield! Even if I go explore, there is still Garfield backing me up. On the other hand, you cannot control Garfield. Thus, it would be best for me to be the one to go.”

Chen Xiaolian held Bone Crusher Axe in his hand. “Do not quarrel with me about this! I am the most suited for this! Besides, your task is not simple. Staying here to monitor is the equivalent of being my eyes. The places that I cannot see will all be up to your control. My safety will largely depend on you!”

“...” Roddy nodded silently.

...

Chen Xiaolian led Nagase Komi out while Roddy stayed in the control room, locking the doors to the control room.

Nagase Komi was slightly dissatisfied as she showed keen interest to stay behind with Roddy... the control room appeared much safer in comparison.

However, Chen Xiaolian refused to be soft-hearted at a time like this.

Chen Xiaolian may be soft-hearted toward ordinary people. However, Nagase Komi had once been an enemy who had tried to harm him. Although they had taken her in, she had yet to prove herself. Thus, he

will never be a boy scout at a time like this.

“Your performance so far has been extremely lacking!” Chen Xiaolian said coldly. “Back in the rail car when the monster was attacking, all you did was hide in fear. When we were fighting it, you trembled in fear! If that is the case, why should I bring you along to complete the quest? If you do not put in any contribution, I have no obligation to help you. If you want me to recognize you, you had better perform well later on. Do not forget, you had once set up a mine to harm us! I am not foolish enough to forget that!”

Chen Xiaolian forced Nagase Komi out of the control room.

...

“Xiaolian, turn left when you reach the corridor in front of you.”

“The door to your right can be opened. It is an open-space office. The open-space office has three doors, use the door situated to the far right and you can enter another corridor.”

Roddy’s steady voice came out from the walkie-talkie.

Chen Xiaolian had Garfield moving before him, while Nagase Komi held the rear.

Truthfully, the level of safety has increased considerably. With Roddy monitoring the situation from the control room, they could be certain that the nearby areas were all secure. If any dangerous situation arose, Roddy could give them an early warning.

Chen Xiaolian followed Roddy’s cues and entered an open-space office.

The office was large with over twenty work desks in place, in addition to two cubicles separated for meeting purposes.

The room was also empty, not a soul in sight. The table surface and floor were littered with files.

However, there was something peculiar about all this...

“I am curious about one thing, where have these people run off to?” Chen Xiaolian picked up the walkie-talkie while surveying the area. He

whispered. “Even if everyone here were infected with the virus and had transformed into monsters... or if they were killed by monsters, there should be traces of blood or corpses, right? But this office is too clean!”

Many objects were scattered messily across the table whereas some chairs were left overturned on the floor.

It was as though an emergency evacuation had been carried out, leaving not a single person behind.

Chen Xiaolian moved past a work desk and looked at the items furnishing the desk. Upon the desk was a computer and a few rows of folders. There was also a staff card hanging from the side of the computer. The colour of the staff card was similar to Takeuchi Yoko’s.

On the surface of the card was a picture of a chubby, round faced girl with a sunny smile.

Chen Xiaolian readily pocketed the staff card. Just as he was about to follow Roddy’s instructions to leave the office from the door, he suddenly heard a banging sound from the cabinet beside the wall!

Chen Xiaolian was shocked!

He subconsciously raised the muzzle of his rifle.

There was a row of metal cabinets placed beside the wall. The earlier sound had originated from one of the cabinet doors!

“Aah!”

Nagase Komi was the first to scream out and Chen Xiaolian slapped her on the head without holding back. “What are you screaming for? Hold on to your gun!” Then, he grabbed on to the muzzle of her gun. “Do not point your gun at me! Point it elsewhere! Idiot! When you are not going to fire the gun, point it downward!”

Chen Xiaolian snapped his fingers and sent Garfield pouncing forward.

With a “pa”, Garfield’s paw slammed down and the cabinet door was deformed!

Following that, Chen Xiaolian heard a sharp cry.

Nagase Komi quickly shouted. "It's not me!"

"Garfield, come back!" Chen Xiaolian immediately stopped Garfield from making his next move. Chen Xiaolian then moved forward. Gripping the cabinet door, he tore the door of the cabinet out.

"A a ah!"

From inside the door, a girl who was huddling herself fell out. She rolled onto the floor and quickly crawled under the table beside them. She held on to her head and shouted loudly. "Don't kill me, don't kill me!"

Chen Xiaolian looked at the woman who was wearing a uniform. She sported a short hair and was slightly chubby... Chen Xiaolian immediately recognized her. Coincidentally, she was none other than the round faced girl whose staff ID card he had picked up moments ago.

However, she has a more mature appearance here when compared to that of her picture. Clearly, she has also applied some makeup on.

"Stop shouting!" Chen Xiaolian went over, pulled her up and covered her mouth. "Stop shouting!"

The round faced girl looked at Chen Xiaolian in fear and wide opened eyes. When she saw that he was wearing tactical vests and clothing, she appeared somewhat relieved.

Chen Xiaolian released his grip on her and she asked gingerly. "You... are you a cop?"

Chen Xiaolian glanced at his own attire – standard equipment of the Special Assault Team and nodded. "Yes, who are you?"

"I... I am Mai Sumoku. I work here," Mai Sumoku gripped onto Chen Xiaolian's arm. "I beg you, I beg you, please send me out of here! Save me!"

"Calm down!" Chen Xiaolian extricated his hand from her hold and quickly continued. "Calm down! Now, answer my questions!"

"...yes!"

"Your name is Mai Sumoku. Do you work here?"

“Yes.”

“What happened here?”

“I don’t... I don’t know...” Mai Sumoku broke out in tears. “We received a broadcast for an emergency evacuation. I... I was in the washroom at the time of the broadcast. By the time I got out, everyone had left. I... I heard strange noises and miserable screams and got terrified. So... so, I just went and hide.”

Mai Sumoku’s cries gradually grew louder. “Someone was killed! I heard our manager’s scream! He was killed!”

“...” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. He watched as the girl teetered on the brink of losing her mind and quickly delivered a slap onto her face. Mai Sumoku’s face swelled from the slap and she staggered. However, it did manage to calm her down.

“Sorry, I just wanted you to calm down,” Chen Xiaolian looked her in the eye. “Do not be afraid! I am here now! See? I have weapons!”

Mai Sumoku caught sight of Garfield who was crouching beside Chen Xiaolian and she panicked again. “That... what is that thing?”

“This is... this is a new military dog developed by the military department,” Chen Xiaolian lied to her with a straight face. “Enough, do not ask me about these details! Right now, I will be the one to ask questions while you answer. Understood? After you reply, I will take you out of this place!”

“... yes, yes!”

“Back then, you said that everyone here received an evacuation broadcast? But you were in the washroom? And the others have already left?”

“I don’t know... maybe they have left. Maybe some people were left behind. By the time I came out, the others have already left. Before I could get to the door of the office, I heard miserable screams coming from the outside. That was the voice of our manager.

“Then, I saw...”

“What did you see?”

“I saw that he had died! He died! His body was torn into two! So many, so many blood!” Mai Sumoku sobbed. “I became too scared. So, I climbed into the cabinet and hid myself there.”

“Then?”

“Then... I... I might have fainted for a moment. However, I do not know when...”

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. “All right. Now, let me ask you... do you know where the location of the washroom?”

“Washroom?”

Mai Sumoku was dumbfounded. “You mean... the washroom?”

“That is right! The washroom! Where is the washroom?” Chen Xiaolian quickly replied. “Don’t ask so much! Just answer my questions!”

“Just there...” Mai Sumoku’s face revealed confusion as she pointed at the door to the left of the office. “Just turn right after you exit the door, and then keep moving forward. When you reach an intersection, you will see the washroom.”

“All right!” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “Nagase Komi!”

“Eh? Yes!” Nagase Komi quickly stepped forward.

“Stay here and watch over her! Accompany her and wait for me to return!”

“Eh?” Nagase Komi stared with widened eyes before quavering. “I... I...”

“Don’t worry!” Chen Xiaolian looked at her. “I will be back soon. If there is any danger, just open fire! Understood? Once I hear the sound of gunshot, I will hurry back!”

“I...” Nagase Komi wanted to say something but Chen Xiaolian ignored it. He pulled Nagase Komi and placed her beside Mai Sumoku before moving quickly toward the office door.

“The... manager died in there!” Mai Sumoku shouted out from the back.

...

“Roddy!”

“I hear you,” Roddy’s voice replied through the walkie-talkie. The left corridor outside the office is secure! Nothing suspicious there. Eh? The corridor seems very clean. There are neither corpses nor bloodstains.”

Chen Xiaolian pushed the door of the office and stepped out. After examining both sides of the corridors, he found that it was indeed very clean.

However, when he reached the intersection, he found that the floor was slippery. He lowered his head before knitting his eyebrows.

There were indeed no bloodstains on the floor. However, a transparent layer of viscous liquid covered the floor.

No, it would be more accurate to say that the viscous liquid had turned solid. The floor appeared to be coated with a thin layer of wax.

Due to its transparent nature, the surveillance monitors were unable to make it out.

“What is this thing?” Chen Xiaolian quickly crouched down and extended his hand to pinch it.

It was both hard and brittle. One pinch was enough to cause it to break apart. Chen Xiaolian rubbed it with his hands and found that it shared the same texture as wax. However, it exuded an indescribably pungent and fishy stench.

Chen Xiaolian stooped forward as he continued moving. After he reached the intersection of the corridor, Garfield who was following behind Chen Xiaolian began exhibiting signs of restlessness. Garfield released sounds of “wu wu” as he faced the door to the washroom.

Chen Xiaolian’s heart gave a pound. He gestured with his fingers and Garfield charged inside, slamming open the washroom door as he did so. Chen Xiaolian followed from behind. However, he did not hear any

sounds of fighting from Garfield.

The moment he stepped through the washroom door, Chen Xiaolian was left flabbergasted by what he saw!

“This, this is? What the Hell is this?”

The rifle and axe in his hands fell down the floor as he gaped at what he saw within the washroom!

...

—

1 ‘Fair and wealthy miss’, raw: ‘白富美’, pinyin: ‘bái fù měi’. An internet term that refers to females with milky white skin, beautiful face, great body, excellent disposition and a strong financial base.

2 Black technology. A term used in the anime ‘Full Metal Panic’, it refers to technology that far exceeds that of the real world.

Mai Sumoku. Raw: ‘麻衣熏’, pinyin: ‘má yī xūn’.

Chapter 144: Terrifying Wax Figures

The washroom was supposed to occupy a very large area.

However, after entering the washroom, Chen Xiaolian felt as though he had just stepped into a nightmare!

...

Within the room, its floor, walls and even the ceiling... all of it was densely stacked full with...

Corpses!

That was right, corpses!

The corpses were varied. There were those staff members wearing work clothes, researchers wearing lab coats, security personnel wearing security uniform as well as cleaning staff...

A cursory glance told him that there were at least twenty corpses stored inside the washroom!

But, that scene was not the most horrifying part. The most horrifying part was...

There were no bloodstains at all on the floor!

All the various corpses stored within the washroom were covered in a thick layer of transparent... wax shell?

Yes, the corpses appeared to have been bound by a thick layer of transparent wax!

It was as though something had wrapped up these corpses with wax. Then, after the corpses were carefully preserved, it was all... stored here!

Looking around, Chen Xiaolian saw that in the corner of the washroom, a corpse was hanging down from the ceiling. The layer of wax shell wrapping the corpse had yet to fully harden and viscous liquid dripped down the ground.

The other end of the corpse was glued to the ceiling with the viscous

liquid! The corpse that was hung using the viscous liquid swayed. However, the viscous liquid holding the corpse remained firm and the corpse did not fall.

All the corpses showed different states of death. Some had their bodies torn to pieces, some had their heads torn off, and some were missing half their body...

Due to the thick layer of viscous liquid and wax shell covering the corpses, the room was almost devoid of the scent of blood.

That was extremely peculiar! The smell of the wax present in the room was extremely fishy and the scent of blood could not be sensed at all. However, the pungent smell of the wax nearly caused Chen Xiaolian to run out the door.

Chen Xiaolian covered his nose and mouth tightly. However, he was unable to stop the strong fishy wax smell from assailing his nose.

“Bloody Hell!” Chen Xiaolian continued covering his nose. “The smell here is simply the stuff of nightmares! Roddy!”

“What did you see? I cannot see anything here!” Roddy smiled bitterly. “There are no surveillance cameras in the washroom. What is inside?”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “It is best if you don’t see it! This stuff will cause people to suffer from nightmares for a whole month.”

Chen Xiaolian moved to the closest wax shell and rapped it gently with his hand. It was both hard and brittle. Chen Xiaolian’s heart suddenly gave a pound as he abruptly thought of something!

“Lair!”

He suddenly raised his head and carefully examined the arrangements within the washroom.

Lair!

That is right, this must be a lair!

The nature of animals propels them to create lairs!

This place is the washroom. What does the washroom have in abundance?

There are plenty of water here, making this place extremely moist!

For the monster to reserve so many corpses here – clearly, these corpses are not for it to finish eating in one go. Instead...

Reserve food?

Or are those corpses meant to serve any other purpose?

“Xiaolian, stop wasting time. Just hurry up and find the memory card!” Roddy’s voice from the walkie-talkie reminded Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian stopped thinking about it and quickly ran into each of the washroom’s cubicles. All of them had been smashed and corpses covered with wax shells filled the cubicles. Chen Xiaolian found the item that Takeuchi Yoko hid in the toilet tank of the innermost cubicle.

It was a small, sealed metal box, roughly the size of a cigarette box. It was sealed to ensure that the box would be waterproof. After taking it out, Chen Xiaolian opened it and examined its contents. As expected, there was a memory card stored inside.

“Roddy, I got it!” Chen Xiaolian quickly spoke into the walkie-talkie. “We need a card reader! Do you have one there?”

“I do!” Roddy answered in an elated tone of voice. “There is a card reader in the control room. I will remove it and take it with me.”

“All right. Now, we will move back to the control room. You are responsible for giving directions,” Chen Xiaolian said hastily. “Then, we will meet up in the control room.”

“Wait!” Roddy’s sound from the walkie-talkie was suddenly raised. “Something is not right! Xiaolian!”

“What is it?”

“Zzzt... zzzt... corridor... zzzt... zzzt... camera...”

“What?”

“Zzzt, zzzt... camera... toward... zzzt... moving! Zzzt zzzt...”

Damn it! Chen Xiaolian cursed out. He hung the walkie-talkie on his shoulder, retrieved Bone Crusher Axe and rushed out from the washroom.

Garfield followed right beside him. When they reached the corridor, Chen Xiaolian inspected both left and right.

From the far end of the corridor, a few light bulbs burst out. Clearly, those bulbs were destroyed due to shorting circuits.

“Let’s go, Garfield!”

Chen Xiaolian turned around and led Garfield with him as he ran back toward the office.

...

“Damn it!”

Roddy struck the control panel with his fist and shook the walkie-talkie within his hand vigorously a few times. However, its signal appeared to be suffering from an unknown interference of sorts. All it did was issue out buzzing sounds and Chen Xiaolian’s sound could not be heard at all.

“Damn it! What is going on here?”

Roddy stared at the display monitors.

He watched as Chen Xiaolian ran out of the washroom and head toward the office through the corridor.

At the same time, from another direction...

Upon the wall of display monitors within the control room, one after another, the display monitors were showing snowflake like images!

It was as though the surveillance cameras were being broken, thus causing the screen of the display monitors to display a snowflake like image before blacking out.

Furthermore, according to the way the snowflake images upon the monitors were spreading, the problem appeared to be following a certain direction. Wherever that problem moved toward, the surveillance

cameras of the area would be broken!

Watching the screen of the display monitors blacking out one after another... Roddy could see that the problem was heading toward the area where Chen Xiaolian was at!

“What the Hell is that thing?” Roddy quickly controlled the surveillance cameras fixed upon the surrounding areas to investigate the matter.

Then, he was finally able to discover something through another surveillance camera.

Something akin to a black shadow flashed through rapidly, causing the display monitor to issue out a buzzing sound before the snowflake like image appeared on the screen.

“??” Roddy stared with widened eyes. Clenching his teeth, he picked up the walkie-talkie and tried to get through to Chen Xiaolian but found that it was not working. He then slapped down on the table, picked up the rifle that was placed on the table and pulled out a military knife. He turned around and rushed out from the control room.

...

“You’re back!” Nagase Komi gave a sigh of relief when she saw Chen Xiaolian return.

Chen Xiaolian did not have the time to reply her as he asked Mai Sumoku. “Do you know where the master control room is?”

“... I know,” Mai Sumoku answered in the same cautious manner. “But... but, I cannot enter that place. I do not have the clearance.”

“Do not worry about that! Take us there!”

“No! We should leave this place immediately!” Mai Sumoku cried. “I want to go home! I want to leave! Aren’t you a police officer? You should be taking be away from this place! Aaaaaah!”

The girl then screamed out.

Suddenly, a snapping sound was heard!

A resounding slap fell onto Mai Sumoku's face.

The one to deliver the slap was Nagase Komi. This female Awakened raised her hand and delivered another backhand slap onto Mai Sumoku's face.

The slap left several red fingerprints on Mai Sumoku's face.

"Shut up! Do not cry anymore! You are not allowed to cry!" Nagase Komi appeared to be even more agitated compared to Mai Sumoku and she ruthlessly spat out. "Just follow his orders! If you want to leave, then you can leave alone! Just pray that you do not get eaten by monsters!"

"... wu wu wu..." Mai Sumoku clutched her face as she continued sobbing.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Nagase Komi and saw that she was looking at him with an ingratiating expression. Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows but nodded his head.

"Guild Leader, what do we do now?" Nagase Komi asked Chen Xiaolian.

"We'll head to the master control room," Chen Xiaolian pouted. "Let her head the way. You protect her while I take guard."

"Yes!" Nagase Komi forced herself to be courageous and pulled Mai Sumoku up. She then pushed Mai Sumoku forward. "If you do not want to die, then bring us there! After completing our task, we will bring you out! Crying here is only a waste of your time. Hurry up!"

The three of them marched out of the office. Although Mai Sumoku was still afraid, Nagase Komi's coercion managed to force her forward as she led them toward the master control room, her body trembling along the way.

They left the office and reached the corridor. Mai Sumoku was responsible for leading the way and they made two turns along the way – the construction of this place was actually quite standard. Several corridors were intersected, resembling the character '井'. By doing so, this place was split into several different areas.

It was not really that difficult to find.

After they reached an intersection, Mai Sumoku said. "After turning right, go straight ahead. There will be a set of stairs after that, followed by a security door. I do not have the clearance to enter. Only senior staff members have the clearance to enter that area."

Senior staff member?

Chen Xiaolian thought about it and abruptly retrieved a piece of staff ID card from his pocket. It was the one he had picked up earlier. "This one?"

"Yes! That is the one!" Seeing the card, Mai Sumoku was momentarily stunned. She then quickly nodded her head.

"Hurry up and go!" Chen Xiaolian's heart felt agitated as he felt a faint sense of unease.

Moving along the corridor, they reached the security door that Mai Sumoku mentioned. The security door was a very thick and durable metal fence-type door. Beside it was a card reader device.

"This door was created using a special alloy. Not even cutting machines would be able to cut it open," Mai Sumoku then pointed at the card reader device. "You can only enter by swiping the card there."

Chen Xiaolian produced the card and was about to move over to swipe it through the reader when he suddenly heard "pa pa" sounds coming over clearly through the back corridor.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly turned around!

He stared at the corridor and observed for a moment. With the exception of some lights flickering due to the shorted circuits, there was nothing unusual in the corridor.

Chen Xiaolian frowned and turned his head back only to hear another two "pa pa" sounds!

This time, the sound was more distinct. Chen Xiaolian immediately snapped his head back, raised his MP5 submachine gun and aimed it at

the corridor. He shouted. "Who? Roddy, is that you?"

No response.

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Garfield who was restlessly pawing about before him.

"Did you sense anything?" Chen Xiaolian frowned as he patted Garfield's head. Garfield twitched his nose.

Ah well, he is a cat, not a dog.

Chen Xiaolian was about to turn around when he suddenly smelled something peculiar

That smell was...

A pungent fishy stench!

Chen Xiaolian was all too familiar with that smell!

This smell was the pungent waxy smell that he had to endure from back inside the washroom!

Chen Xiaolian's heart gave a pound and he tossed aside any attempts to further consider the matter. He simply turned around, took one step back and fired out with his rifle.

Tat tat tat!

He did not hesitate to fire out a barrage of bullets.

The bullets swept across the floor and walls of the corridor, leaving a series of bullet holes.

"Guild Leader?" Nagase Komi was shocked and she raised her gun as she shivered. "What is going on?"

"Up on top!" Chen Xiaolian suddenly furrowed his eyebrows and shouted. "The ceiling! The ventilation ducts! Fire at them!"

The MP5 submachine gun in his hand sprayed out a hail of bullets, sweeping the ventilation duct on the ceiling some distance away! An air-conditioning vent was blasted to the point of falling apart.

It was then that the air-conditioning vent collapsed down! From the exposed ventilation duct, a black coloured shadow emerged!

...

That thing appeared like a...

Like a giant frog?

No, the surface of its body was bumpy; it would be more accurate to say that it resembled a giant toad!

The bullets from the MP5 sped toward it, striking the giant toad's body. To Chen Xiaolian's disappointment, all the bullets bounced off it!

The toad's body seemed extremely soft and greasy. It was as though a thick layer of viscous liquid was covering it. Like rubber, it bounced off all the bullets striking it, letting the bullets hit its surroundings.

"Son of a bitch!"

Chen Xiaolian lowered the rifle and shouted. "Garfield!"

Garfield let out a howl and charged forward. As he was soaring through the air, his body split into three Garfield doppelgangers.

The three Garfield doppelgangers charged onto the toad, activating the Tiger Rush skill. The front most Garfield doppelganger's attack sent the toad flying and it slammed heavily against the wall!

At that moment, something strange happened.

Like an inflatable balloon, the toad bounced off the wall after being slammed against the wall! It bounced onto the ceiling and its viscous liquid allowed it to stick to the ceiling!

Garfield opened his mouth and let loose a roar.

Cat's Roar skill!

A transparent mass of air shot over. Unfortunately, the toad was extremely clever. It dropped down the ceiling and onto the floor, like a balloon. Then, it rolled to the back.

Cat's Roar did not hit it!

Two Garfield doppelgangers pounced on the giant toad from both left and right. Their four paws attempted to press down the toad. However, the surface of the toad's body was covered with too much of the viscous liquid. Who knew what that viscous liquid was, but Garfield's paws slid across it while the toad remained unharmed. The toad quickly snuck away from the doppelgangers before turning around, opening its mouth.

“Gu!”

A clump of viscous liquid shot out from the toad's mouth and fell onto the bodies of the two Garfield doppelgangers.

The two Garfield doppelgangers were rapidly caught by the huge clump of viscous liquid. They struggled desperately to break free. However, the more they struggled, the more chaotic it became and the tighter they found themselves caught within it.

As the giant toad was about to spit out more of its viscous liquid, Garfield's third doppelganger leapt forward.

His front paw swiped out in a blow that carried its full might! But the toad was simply smacked away like a rubber ball. After bouncing around the corridor for a while, it shook its body and got up again.

The thick layer of viscous liquid on its body was acting as a thick layer of defence and cushion. All attacks against it had their forces dispersed by that layer.

“What the son of a bitch monster is this?” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. “Garfield, hold that thing!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly turned around and swiped the card across the card reader device.

After several beeping sounds, the thick metal fence door slowly rose up.

“Go go go! Hurry up and go!”

Chen Xiaolian tossed the two girls inside before charging in himself! Then, he swiped the card across the card reader device located beside the door.

Following two beeping sounds, the metal fence door fell down heavily!

At the same time, the third Garfield doppelganger had been trapped by the viscous liquid as well. His entire body was covered with the jelly like substance. No matter how hard he tried to break free, he could not succeed.

Chen Xiaolian saw that all three of Garfield's doppelgangers were now trapped by the viscous liquid.

Chen Xiaolian shouted. "Come back, Garfield!"

Following a beam of light, the three Garfield doppelgangers disappeared, together with the clump of viscous liquid entangling them. Chen Xiaolian has summoned them back into the system.

The giant toad rushed over and its body slammed onto the metal fence with a bang!

The metal fence that was as thick as an arm was indeed durable. Living up to its name of a form of alloy, the door did not even shake from the impact!

Chen Xiaolian quickly pulled the two girls back and they quickly retreated. Mai Sumoku was scared senseless and could only scream out continuously. Nagase Komi could not even scream out as Chen Xiaolian pushed her two to three meters to the back.

Chen Xiaolian turned around to face the giant toad.

The metal fence door separated them both.

Chen Xiaolian could clearly sense that the toad's eyes were staring at him. Within those eyes, there was a faint feeling of coldness.

Ka ka.

Chen Xiaolian raised the MP5 submachine gun and fired out two bursts. The bullets struck the toad's body and were bounced off.

"Hmph!" Chen Xiaolian regarded the toad. "It turned out to be a toad!"

Looking at the toad before him, Chen Xiaolian felt relieved.

It appeared that the monster was unable to break through the security door.

Apparently, the security door of this place was extremely durable.

However, right when Chen Xiaolian was feeling relieved... in the very next moment, he froze up!

The giant toad charged forward, plastering its huge body onto the metal door!

Next, its mouth began to discharge its viscous liquid continuously.

Its body was just like an untied balloon as it shrank at an extremely rapid pace!

The gap on the fence door was only 10 cm in width.

This monster's body, however was rapidly becoming flatter and flatter... additionally, the layer of viscous liquid on its body also acted as a form of lubricant...

Bit by bit, it was able to push in a small part of its body through the gap in the fence!

"Oh, Hell! Hurry up and run!" Chen Xiaolian's face distorted and he turned around, grabbing Nagase Komi and Mai Sumoku as he attempted to run.

Just as he was about to extend his hand to grab Mai Sumoku, the toad suddenly opened its mouth and a crimson tongue shot out like lightning!

Like a red coloured lightning, the tongue travelled nearly three meters and wrapped around the shoulders of Mai Sumoku, who was kneeling and crying sharply on the floor. Then, the tongue rapidly rolled back!

The girl's sizeable body was pulled toward the toad by the tongue!

Before Chen Xiaolian could pull her back, the tongue had already pulled Mai Sumoku until she was before the toad. The toad retracted its tongue and blood flowed from Mai Sumoku's body.

The toad did not give Chen Xiaolian any chance to save Mai Sumoku

and bit down onto her shoulder!

When the toad opened its mouth, Chen Xiaolian noticed that it has the same circle of sharp, serrated teeth that the giant insect from back then had.

Following a “kacha” sound, the Japanese girl’s miserable shrieks were cut off! Part of her body, the left side of her shoulder was bitten off by the toad!

Blood sprayed out and the internal organs from her chest fell out.

The toad quickly spat out a huge amount of viscous liquid to cover the girl’s corpse...

Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly. Without showing any hesitation, he turned around, pulled Nagase Komi and ran!

The damned toad was too much of a freak!

It was mainly due to its miraculous layer of viscous liquid. Its defensive powers were too overwhelming. The layer of viscous liquid cushioned off even Garfield’s [A-] strength and he was unable to harm the monster. In contrast, the toad did not reveal much of its attacks.

Chen Xiaolian has no intention of toughing it out with the monster. He pulled Nagase Komi and ran madly to the interior.

The area after the security door was clearly one grade higher.

Before them was a spiral shaped staircase leading upward. They were able to see a huge room made of a material that resembled transparent glass.

The room surrounded by the transparent glass was filled with various instruments and control panels. It was the master control room.

This place was obviously the central hub of this place. Moreover, the control room was located high above, giving it a great view from above.

Chen Xiaolian pulled Nagase Komi up the stairs and glanced back to see that the toad had just ‘squeezed’ itself inside through the gap in the fence door.

“Stop looking! Hurry up and move!” Chen Xiaolian slapped Nagase Komi on her head.

The door to the control room was opened.

It was unknown if the people had left the door opened during the evacuation or if it was due to something else. The two of them rushed into the control room and Chen Xiaolian quickly sent his hand out to shut the door.

He then rapped the glass wall and found that it was very thick.

“For a place like this, this glass should at least be bulletproof, right?” Chen Xiaolian aimed his MP5 submachine gun at the glass and fired. As expected, it only left minor white coloured marks.

“Hopefully, this glass wall can help us block it for a moment.”

Chen Xiaolian looked around and saw that there were two doors within this control room, one left and one right. He felt a little at ease.

He quickly ran toward the control panel but the controls were too complex. Despite studying it for a long period of time, he was unable to find any clues about what he needed to do. He could not help but feel frustrated.

Picking up the walkie-talkie to call Roddy, all he got was the “zzzt zzzt” sounds.

Self-destruct device... self-destruct device...

Chen Xiaolian checked the control panel in frustration.

In most movies, don't these self-destruct devices usually have a big eye-catching, red coloured button?

After you press it, a huge screen should appear, clearly putting the countdown on display – shouldn't that be the case for most movies?

Chen Xiaolian was unable to do anything as he looked at the high number of buttons arranged densely on the control panel.

Then, he heard several banging sounds!

Turning his head around to look, he saw that the giant toad had already jumped its way up the stairs and was throwing itself onto the transparent glass door!

Pa! Pa! Pa!

This time, the glass door was a fully sealed door with no gaps for the toad to slip through. The toad's body suddenly swelled up like a balloon.

Then...

Bang!

Bang!

The toad slammed onto the glass door and glass wall, again and again!

Under the toad's constant attacks, the reinforced bulletproof glass gave out "weng weng" sounds.

"Guild Leader! It... will it get inside?"

"Don't worry!" Chen Xiaolian spoke out some words of comfort while he secretly gave a bitter smile: How would I know...

He casually pressed some buttons on the control panel's keyboard, but there was no response.

Just then, a loud boom rang out from the outside!

Numerous cracks had appeared upon the glass door! Subsequently, part of it collapsed down!

Seeing that there was a way through, the giant toad hastily tried to push its body through!

"Damn it!" Chen Xiaolian was infuriated. He quickly snatched up a chair and charged forward, slamming brutally onto the part of the toad's body that was squeezing itself inside.

After smashing it a few times, the toad's body was flattened and it slowly shrank back.

"Move move move! Move out of the door!" Chen Xiaolian turned around and said.

At that moment, a sound suddenly came from the outside.

“Xiaolian! Where are you? Xiaolian!”

Chen Xiaolian looked through the glass wall and saw Roddy below the stairs. He was carrying his sniper rifle as he stood outside the security fence door!

...

Chapter 145: Research and Development Centre

“Roddy!”

Chen Xiaolian waved frantically. Roddy caught sight of Chen Xiaolian who was standing inside the control room through the glass wall. Roddy was about to say something when he noticed the giant toad that was in the midst of shrinking back out from the door. The toad turned around and regarded Roddy with a pair of cold eyes.

“Holy shit! What the Hell is that thing?”

Roddy was shocked by the sight and he raised his sniper rifle, quickly pulling its safety lever.

“Roddy! Hurry up and retreat!”

Chen Xiaolian ran out through the other door of the control room and leaned over the rail. Next, he flipped and jumped down. Nagase Komi followed him and ran out of the room.

A loud booming sound rang out and the glass door blocking the toad was shattered. The toad rushed inside the room. Nagase Komi quickly slammed the other door shut and the incoming toad slammed headfirst onto the door. However, it was bounced backward.

“Guild Leader!”

Nagase Komi then jumped down the rails. “What do we do now?”

“Roddy! Card reader!” Chen Xiaolian shouted toward Roddy.

Roddy immediately understood what he meant. He pressed his hand onto the card reader device for the security fence door and activated his Mechanical Heart skill. The door was slowly raised and Roddy ran inside. Chen Xiaolian ran toward him from the other side.

“What the Hell is that thing on top?”

“Don’t worry about that first! Memory card!” Chen Xiaolian shoved the

memory card toward Roddy.

“It is inside the control room,” Roddy looked at the toad that was slamming onto the glass door.

“I’ll think of something to lure it away. Then, you enter the control room,” Chen Xiaolian whispered. “I cannot operate any of the things inside. I’m counting on you for that!”

“... you be careful,” Roddy nodded his head.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Nagase Komi. “Do not follow me. Your running speed is too slow. Follow Roddy!”

“Yes!” Nagase Komi gasped.

Chen Xiaolian turned around and ran up the stairs on the side again. After ascending the steps, he continued until he reached the broken glass door area. Then, he picked up a chair and threw it onto the giant toad!

With a bang, the chair fell onto the toad’s body before bouncing off.

“Come get me, bastard!” Chen Xiaolian roared. Then, he turned tail and ran.

Behind him, the toad jumped and was soon out of the room. It chased after Chen Xiaolian through the stairs, rolling down like a rubber ball.

Roddy pulled Nagase Komi and they hid themselves by the side. Chen Xiaolian ran as fast as he could from the toad, picking up whatever chair he could lay his hands on from the surroundings and tossing them onto the toad that was chasing him. This action of his incited the monster.

“We’ll head up!” Roddy brought Nagase Komi around to the other side and ascended the steps to enter the control room.

From their high vantage point, they could view what was happening in the hall below. From there, they saw Chen Xiaolian luring the toad further and further away.

Roddy suppressed the anxiousness within his heart and proceeded to work on operating the control panel.

...

After leading the toad back and forth through the hall, Chen Xiaolian ran back out of the security fence door and continued to lead the toad as he ran frantically.

As for the toad, it was in hot pursuit, chasing after Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian ran through and out of the earlier office room and back into the corridor. He saw that the monitoring control room was just before him. He then glanced to the side of the corridor where the storage room was located. Suddenly, he had an idea.

He quickly ran toward the door of the storage room and deliberately rapped down heavily onto the metal door.

As expected, a deafening sound resonated across from inside the room as the door was slammed from the inside, creating a huge ruckus.

Chen Xiaolian purposely leaned near the door and looked back at the toad. After the toad had moved closer, Chen Xiaolian sneered and gestured toward the toad with a hooking finger gesture. "Come! I found you a sparring partner!"

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian produced the staff ID card and swiped it across the card reader device on the storage room's door.

After several beeping sounds, the lock to the metal door popped open!

Without any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian immediately retreated. Quickly moving beneath an air-conditioning vent, he jumped up, caught and ripped apart the lid of the air-conditioning vent before pulling himself inside.

At the same time, he heard a maddening howl erupt from below.

The monster that was encaged within the storage room burst out wildly!

Its long body lay upon the floor and its mouth kept releasing threatening growls.

Bursting out from the storage room, this monster slammed head first into the wall on the other side of the corridor. With a bang, a concave

appeared on the wall.

However, the monster was very resilient and it quickly crawled up. It turned around and saw the giant toad crouching upon the other side of the corridor.

The two monsters made eye contact!

The toad felt danger and quickly inflated its body as fast as it could, like an inflatable balloon. At the same time, its mouth uttered out a sharp sound. This sound resembled the bellow issued by a cow.

The other monster immediately reared up its body. Both its paws were placed on the floor and even its tail was raised.

After issuing a howl, the monster charged toward the giant toad! The two monsters became entangled with each other, and their immense strength pushed them to slam into a room beside the corridor. Banging sounds soon followed and continued without respite. Howling sounds also reverberated continuously from inside the room.

Chen Xiaolian crawled through the ventilation ducts as best he can. As he did so, he heard the roars getting louder and louder. Gradually, the sound grew distant. Clearly, the two monsters were fighting and chasing each other while moving farther away.

Chen Xiaolian made an estimate regarding his current bearing and crawled through the ventilation duct for a while longer before jumping out from another air-conditioning vent. Checking his surroundings, he found that he had arrived back inside the office where he found Mai Sumoku.

Chen Xiaolian bolted quickly toward the security fence door. Rushing in through the security door, he quickly shut it down again.

“Phew!” He released a sigh of relief. “That should buy us some time.”

No matter which of those two monsters ended up winning, their fight should be able to give them some time – however, Chen Xiaolian judged that the giant toad has a higher chance of winning.

The monster that was encaged inside the storage room has a very fearsome appearance. However, it was clear that it was a monster of the strength type. It was probably about the same as the monster Chen Xiaolian had encountered back in the rail car. Against the giant toad that was impervious to bullets and swords, the monster from the storage room would likely suffer defeat.

Chen Xiaolian ran up the stairs and re-entered the master control room. As he was entering, he heard Roddy shout out. "It is done!"

Roddy turned around to see Chen Xiaolian running inside. "How are you?"

"I am fine," Chen Xiaolian exhaled deeply. "How did it go?"

"Done!" Roddy pointed at the control panel. "The self-destruct device has been activated! This process is irreversible and the countdown has begun. We now have sixty minutes before the self-destruct device goes... bang!"

Nagase Komi stared with bulging eyes. "Then... how do we get out?"

"There is a way. This place has an emergency evacuation passageway," Roddy smiled. "Watch, the schematics is displayed on the display screen."

Sure enough, a flat schematic diagram of the area appeared on the screen located in the middle of the control room. Upon the diagram were a green dot of evacuation and an arrow pointing forward.

"All right, our task is complete. Let's leave this place at once!"

The evacuation area designated by the green dot was not hard to get to. After moving out from the master control room, they found the emergency evacuation door on the other side of the hall. Because the self-destruct sequence had been turned on, the emergency evacuation door has also automatically opened up.

The three of them ran into the evacuation door. They descended a flight of stairs through roughly five to six levels and found themselves facing an area that resembled a station.

There were six circular tunnels here, each of them were big enough for iron rails.

“It’s here! Look, there are shuttle rail cars on the rails. We can use the rail cars to leave this place!” Roddy pointed to the front.

Half of the outlets leading into the circular tunnels were empty while the other three has a metal rail car resting on its rails.

As the three of them ran inside the station, Roddy jumped first into the nearest rail car. After jumping inside however, his face sank.

“This is not right! This rail car is damaged!”

“Damaged?”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

The three of them quickly moved to check the rail car. The rail car was indeed damaged. There were traces of explosions and charred parts on the chassis area of the rail car. Many of its metal parts have broken down and its devices were filled with debris!

“Damn it! Check the other two!” Chen Xiaolian and Roddy separated and ran over to check.

However, they were met with disappointment!

The other two rail cars were also damaged.

One of the rail cars had its rear part blown to pieces.

“Damn it!” Roddy slammed his fist against the wall.

If it was just an ordinary malfunction, his Mechanical Heart skill would still be able to make the rail car operate.

However... the running gears have been damaged, leaving Roddy incapable of doing anything. His skill was Mechanical Heart, not Mechanical God...

“What do we do now, Guild Leader?” Nagase Komi’s voice was tearing.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at the rail cars for a moment.

He had no intention of climbing out through the tunnel on foot.

This tunnel was heading upward. Back then, it took them nearly an hour to reach this place. Although their bodies have been enhanced, there was no way for them to run upward at a speed of several hundred km per hour [1]!

“We’ll head back!” Chen Xiaolian replied grimly. “Find another way out. This place could not possibly have just one emergency point!”

As they have no other options, the three of them ran back toward the emergency evacuation door and into the hall.

Right after they ran back in, they heard a loud rumbling sound.

The security fence door had crashed down!

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to check it out and saw a terrifying image!

The giant toad’s body has expanded until it was double in size compared to its earlier state.

Its huge body allowed it to finally slam down the security fence door!

For some unknown reason, the toad’s strength has increased significantly. Raising its head, the toad opened its mouth and issued out a furious roar before moving slowly toward them.

“Open fire!”

Chen Xiaolian’s MP5 fired out bursts of bullets. The three of them opened fire as they quickly retreated!

The sniper rifle in Roddy’s hands also fired out. The sniper bullet flew out, striking the toad’s body only to be bounced off as well.

The toad pummelled its way through, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Everything within the hall, the tables and chairs were flattened by it.

“Hurry! Use the left passageway!”

Roddy yelled out. Back then, he had memorized the entire schematic

diagram and he now took the lead.

Chen Xiaolian finished the entire magazine on his MP5. Then, he threw it forward before turning tail and running away.

The left passageway led toward a flight of stairs. They descended it and found an elevator.

The three of them had no time to worry about the details. They simply swiped the staff ID card to open the elevator and rushed inside.

As the doors to the elevator was closing...

Bang!

Bang!

The toad slammed forward from the outside with an immense amount of strength, causing the entire elevator shaft to shake!

Fortunately, the elevator was still able to slowly descend.

They reached the bottom. However, before the elevator could fully stop, a loud crash came from over their heads!

It was as though something had descended from the skies, pounding directly onto the roof of the elevator! The top part of the elevator bent inward, forming a concave!

The ceiling of the elevator was broken and the resulting gaps exposed the toad's body. Chen Xiaolian kicked Nagase Komi out of the elevator and pulled Roddy as they charged out of the elevator.

"Roddy!"

Chen Xiaolian shouted.

Roddy understood Chen Xiaolian's intention. He turned around and pressed onto the elevator's control panel. Roddy activated his skill and the doors of the elevator closed up instantly! Next, the buttons on the control panel released sparks of fire, indicating that the elevator doors have been sealed shut.

"Hurry! The elevator doors won't hold it for long!"

Although the elevator was made from materials with special qualities, Chen Xiaolian did not place too much expectations on it.

Running out from the elevator, they found a quiet corridor. Furthermore, there were several metal security doors barring their path, all of them of the fence type. With Roddy's skill, all of them were opened and closed after they entered.

After the three of them crossed through the third security door... Chen Xiaolian felt that those three security doors should be able to buy them some time.

“What is this place?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

“It looks like a research and development centre.”

1 Trivia: The fastest human footspeed on record is 44.64 km/h (12.4 m/s or 27.8 mph) set by Usain Bolt in the 2009 World Championship for the 100 m sprint. [Source: Wiki]

Chapter 146: Open The Door

Chen Xiaolian and his group ran through the corridor. What they found at the end of the corridor resembled something one would find in a military fortress made from concrete.

Before them was a metal door, just like those found within a bank vault. It appeared exceptionally thick and heavy.

Roddy ran forward and utilized his Mechanical Heart skill to open the door's electronic locks.

Chen Xiaolian who was standing at the side suddenly let out a forced smile. "With this skill of yours... if we could survive through this instance dungeon, we could just go pull a grand heist. Let's find an opportunity to go to the Federal Reserve's vault and empty it!"

Roddy rolled his eyes. "Are you seriously thinking about that at a time like this?"

After several beeping sounds, the door of the vault slowly rose up.

The area beyond the door was roughly as big as a basketball court. Warm lighting lamps hung from the walls of the room, exuding a clear illumination.

The floor and walls of the room were spotless.

The three of them walked inside. Suddenly, a voice carried over from their left.

"Don't, don't move!"

...

On their left was a middle-aged man wearing long white coloured lab coat. He trembled while standing behind a metal desk. Judging from his appearance, he was around forty years old with thinning hair and a large forehead. He has a very small and short stature and a very typical Japanese face.

What caught Chen Xiaolian's attention though, was the weapon that

this fellow was holding. It was a long weapon that resembled a rifle.

The muzzle of the weapon was flat in shape and possessed an extremely sci-fi design. That was especially true when regarding the rear part of the rifle. At the bottom position, there was a row of flashing lights. He could clearly see that all of the lights on the weapon were lit. It appeared as though some type of energy within it had reached a critical state and could be fired at any moment!

“Do not move! Do not move!” The middle-aged man appeared very nervous.

Chen Xiaolian quickly extended one hand out, gesturing with it. “Do not panic!”

“Do not come over!” The middle-aged man’s head was dripping with sweat. His arm, which held the weapon, trembled. “Who are you people?”

“Do not panic! Relax!” Chen Xiaolian and Roddy looked at each other. “Do not panic.”

“Who are you people? Who are you?” The middle-aged man became increasingly agitated. It appeared that he might break down at any moment.

“We are... police officers,” Chen Xiaolian deliberately stepped forward, pointing toward the full set of Special Assault Team’s attire that he was wearing. “See? We were sent by the Metropolitan Police Headquarters.”

“Metro... Metropolitan Police?” The middle-aged man seemingly eased up for a bit. However, he was still unwilling to put down his weapon and it was still pointed toward them. “You, are you really sent by the Metropolitan Police Department?”

“Put down the weapon you are holding first,” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “We mean you no harm.”

“No!”

The man’s face suddenly distorted and he raised the rifle up. He stared at Chen Xiaolian, the muzzle of the weapon shaking as he said. “You lie!

If you are from the Metropolitan Police Department, why would you have a girl with you?”

Nagase Komi was not wearing the Special Assault Team’s equipment; she was wearing civilian clothes. It appeared that the middle-aged man was not easy to trick. He had quickly found a flaw in Chen Xiaolian’s lie.

“She...” Chen Xiaolian did not reveal any expression of panic. “She is a civilian. She is one of the civilians that we rescued.”

“Nonsense! Why would there be any civilians here?”

“She is one of the survivors we found from above.”

“Could she be a staff member?” The middle-aged man showed hesitation for a while. However, it soon became steady and he retorted. “Impossible! How could our staff member look like that?”

Nagase Komi’s appearance truly did not fit those who would usually be working in this high-tech research institute. Her head was bald, she wore a nose ring and most importantly, she has a flame shaped tattoo on her neck.

“Do not panic!” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “She is one of the family members of the staff here! Just look! She is just a little girl and not a grown woman. Just look at her carefully! Look, she is just a young little girl. How could she pose any danger? We are not criminals! If we are, why would we bring along a little child as we commit crimes?”

Chen Xiaolian paused for a moment and remained expressionless as he moved forward slightly. He asked. “Do you know Takeuchi Yoko?”

“Takeuchi Yoko?” The middle-aged man pondered the name for a moment. “This name sounds familiar...”

“Right, she is a female staff member from the Administrative Department.”

“Ah, that extremely beautiful one?”

“That is right!” Chen Xiaolian quickly nodded his head and he displayed a relaxed smile on his face. “This is Takeuchi Yoko’s daughter! Her

daughter! She came over to find Takeuchi Yoko, only to be involved in an accident. She got trapped in the vicinity. As part of the rescue team, we rescued her...”

The middle-aged man lowered the rifle in his hand a little. However, he then shook his head and nervously said. “Impossible! This is a secret location. Even the family members of our staff would not be able to enter this place!”

“Enough!” Roddy suddenly shouted out while staring at him. “You bastard! What do you think you are doing? We are police officers! Are you thinking of harming police officers? We are the rescue team sent to provide support! Who are you? To be carrying a weapon, are you thinking of going against the police? State your name!”

The loud words from Roddy and the fact that he was wearing the uniform of the Special Assault Team created an oppressive atmosphere, which overwhelmed the middle-aged man with shock. He hesitated and trembled for moments before replying. “I am Fujino Masayoshi, a research assistant here.”

“Mr. Fujino!” Chen Xiaolian quickly shouted out. “Do not be afraid! We are here to help! Please put down the item in your hand!”

“I...” The man appeared hesitant.

At the same time, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy deliberately stood side by side, blocking Fujino Masayoshi’s view of Nagase Komi.

Chen Xiaolian moved one hand to the back and made a few gestures for Nagase Komi.

Nagase Komi understood immediately. She quietly activated her invisibility skill and her body instantly disappeared from the spot.

Fujino Masayoshi’s line of sight was being blocked and he did not see Nagase Komi’s sudden disappearing act. The rifle in his hand was clearly shaking as he hesitated on whether or not he should put it down...

It was then that a force shoved the muzzle of his rifle upward! Fujino Masayoshi panicked and shouted out loudly and a “weng” sound could be

heard!

The muzzle of the rifle that he was holding fired out a faint orange coloured beam of light! The colour of this beam of light was very faint, seemingly translucent. The beam of light shot out in a straight line toward the ceiling...

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy did not show any hesitation and they rushed forward from both left and right, leaping past the metal table. Roddy knocked Fujino Masayoshi with a fist and Chen Xiaolian quickly seized the weapon in Fujino Masayoshi's hands and tossed it aside. At the same time, he pressed his knee on Fujino Masayoshi's back and firmly pinned Fujino Masayoshi down.

Fujino Masayoshi howled out madly and he struggled frantically. However, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy have had their bodies enhanced up to [B] Class. Before them, Fujino Masayoshi's struggles were not worth mentioning.

Soon, Chen Xiaolian had both of Fujino Masayoshi's hands pulled to his back and his head pressed down on the metal table. Chen Xiaolian then produced a pair of handcuffs to handcuff Fujino Masayoshi.

"Do not kill me! Aargh! Do not kill me! I beg you, please do not kill me! Aaaaaaa!"

As Fujino Masayoshi continued to struggle, Nagase Komi who had returned to being visible furiously delivered a slap onto Fujino Masayoshi's face. "Shut up!"

Roddy raised his head to look up the ceiling. He then abruptly pulled Chen Xiaolian as he sucked in a mouthful of cold air. "Look!"

...

The ceiling that originally had a concrete texture now sported a deep and long gap!

The gully like gap was roughly two meters long. Clearly, it was the handiwork of the beam of light from the miraculous beam weapon held by Fujino Masayoshi earlier.

A gully, half a meter in depth, was created on the surface of the concrete ceiling by the sweeping beam of light.

The rifle had turned out to be so powerful?

“Bloody Hell... what kind of weapon is that? Even when going against a tank, this weapon will be able to cut straight through the tank’s plating!” Roddy stared in shock.

Chen Xiaolian’s face was solemn. He suddenly turned and pointed at the vault door. “Roddy, close the door!”

Roddy answered in affirmation and rushed over to close the vault door. Watching the vault door with a thickness of nearly one meter closing down slowly, the two of them let out a sigh of relief.

With such a powerful defence here, the toad monster on the outside would likely find it difficult to break its way through.

Next, they moved to interrogate the prisoner known as Fujino Masayoshi.

...

The interrogation process for this Fujino Masayoshi was not that difficult. Despite the fellow’s appearance of intelligence, he was very nervous and possessed a surprisingly small amount of courage. He was surprisingly afraid of death.

Roddy merely pulled out a military knife, waved it before Fujino Masayoshi’s face and made a gesture near his neck and Fujino Masayoshi immediately spilled the beans obediently.

His name was Fujino Masayoshi, a 46-year-old from Osaka, hailing from University of Tokyo. He held the position of research assistant within the Mechanical Faction of this research institute. He also held a PhD in Electronic Engineering.

Their current location was an underground research and development centre for the Mechanical Faction. More accurately, it was a warehouse and display area for the research and development of their research

prototypes.

This room that was the size of a basketball court was the central warehouse for display and storage of their research prototypes. This place contained part of the research prototypes that were the fruits of the Mechanical Faction's research.

As for Fujino Masayoshi, even with his qualifications, he was simply a minor figure among the researchers of the Mechanical Faction – although his PhD in Electronic Engineering would make him a person of high status in the eyes of ordinary people, here, he was but a minor figure.

As for what happened to him today, it was hard to say if he was lucky or unlucky.

During the time of the incident, the air filtration system of the research institute detected the intrusive presence of an abnormal virus and instantly made a report to the police. Next, following the level of alarm, it had issued out an emergency evacuation notification to the entire research institute.

Unfortunately, this happened to be the Fujino Masayoshi's day to take care of this underground warehouse.

The research institute's level of security was very high. According to regulations, should an accident occur, this central underground area for research and development would instantly be sealed up!

In other words, the people here will have no chance to evacuate or flee! Once there was an accident, anyone staying inside this place would be sealed inside. If they were lucky, the rescue team would save them. If they were unlucky, then... they will die here!

All of this was to ensure that the research results of the research institute were not leaked out.

For Fujino Masayoshi, this was an unfortunate turn of events.

When the incident occurred, the few safety doors were immediately locked down, including the vault door of this concrete room. All of them

had automatically locked down! Those inside would be unable to get out at all!

In other words, Fujino Masayoshi was a sacrificial lamb.

According to Fujino Masayoshi, he had attempted to use the intercom to contact the control room above. However, he heard only miserable screams coming through the intercom. There were also sounds of panic. The miserable cries had especially terrified Fujino Masayoshi!

...

"I do not know what happened. I swear to God, I really have no clue what happened," Fujino Masayoshi broke out in tears. "I was trapped inside here the whole time. I heard through the intercom those miserable screams and the sounds of crying coming from the control room... I am scared, I do not know what to do... there is no equipment here to contact the outside world. That was to ensure that this research institute's confidential information does not get leaked out. Thus, I was unable to do anything else. I... I could only get my hands on some weapon to protect myself..."

Chen Xiaolian sighed and glanced at Fujino Masayoshi.

Truth be told, he was quite fortunate... if he had ran up, he would probably have died in the upper floor.

At that moment, they suddenly heard a thud coming from the direction of the vault door!

The four people inside the room were able to hear that sound. Fujino Masayoshi's face twisted and he exclaimed. "What is that sound?"

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy glanced at each other. Chen Xiaolian frowned and said. "It is already here? How fast."

It appeared that the three security fence doors on the outside corridor were unable to hold the giant toad for long.

Chen Xiaolian picked Fujino Masayoshi up and asked. "How durable is this room?"

“Eh?”

“Answer his question?” Roddy forcefully slapped Fujino Masayoshi’s head.

“Yes! I will answer!” Fujino Masayoshi cried out in distress. “It should be very durable. This room is made with concrete. It is 4.5 meters thick with layers of steel and lead in the middle, ensuring its safety and obstructing any attempts to probe through it using X-ray. It also effectively blocks off any communication signals. The vault door is made of alloy steel. With a thickness of 90 cm, not even bombs can blow it open.

“This... actually, this room was built according to the standard specifications of the highest grade military fortress. The reason is because; this place is a weapons demonstration room. There is also a military fortification used specifically for the demonstration of weapons.”

Weapons demonstration?

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy looked at each other again. This time, they could catch the glint in each other’s eyes.

“Weapons? Just like this rifle that you were holding earlier?” Chen Xiaolian picked up the beam weapon with his hand.

Considering the size of the beam weapon, it was not as heavy as Chen Xiaolian had expected.

“What kind of weapon is this? Energy weapons? You already have this level of technology?”

Although he was not someone from the military, Chen Xiaolian knew that in the current world, all the major countries were researching energy weapons... at present however, all the published data in this field indicated that there were no ground-breaking achievements in this field.

With the present world’s level of technology, energy weapons was something of a distant prospect.

“This... this is an ion beam rifle,” Fujino Masayoshi trembled as he answered. “This is just a research prototype, it is incomplete.

Additionally, there is a limit to its usage. Our current level of technology does not permit us to effectively use this item, it...”

“It is very powerful,” Roddy sighed as he appraised the gully like hole left on the ceiling.

To be capable of cutting out a gully like hole upon concrete – and that was just from one shot! This energy weapon possessed an overwhelming position of superiority compared to the firearms that present day soldiers possessed.

Judging from its shape, this weapon should have been designed for individual soldiers.

“It... It is still incomplete,” Cold sweat trickled down Fujino Masayoshi’s forehead. “At present, we are still incapable of creating a stable and sustainable energy source for it. Thus... every time it is fired, it will need to be recharged for a considerable amount of time, twenty seconds. Additionally, after firing it for the third time, many of this weapon’s core components will be scrapped and needs to be replaced. We have yet to develop a material that is capable of enduring the resulting load from the powerful energies used... the materials we developed with our current level of technology were all unable to handle the load.”

A thought flashed through Roddy’s mind. “... if so, how did you create this weapon?”

“Err...” Fujino Masayoshi hesitated and his eyes darted about.

It was then... BOOM!

The vault door was slammed yet again and it shook slightly.

Chen Xiaolian’s face turned grim.

Although the vault door appeared intact, it was clear... the vault door’s defensive capability was not as high as he had expected.

A few noticeable cracks had also appeared on the concrete walls beside the vault door!

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to look at Fujino Masayoshi. “In addition

to this rifle, what other weapons does this place have?”

“Eh?”

...

A few minutes later, Roddy’s loud voice of surprise could be heard.

“Holy shit! How do you have so many good stuff? By the Heavens! My... are my eyes deceiving me?”

They stood within the demonstration hall next to a row of glass cabinets. Roddy rubbed his eyes vigorously as he stared at the items placed within the glass cabinets.

Within a metal holder, there was an unusually shaped weapon placed upon it.

Seeing those weapons, Chen Xiaolian simply did not understand what they were. Roddy, on the other hand, kept exclaiming out continuously.

“This... is this an energy beam weapon? Is this a beam-type military knife? Holy shit... what is this? A defensive beam? Or is it a defensive force field? How is that possible? How could Japan achieve this level of technology?”

Ignoring Fujino Masayoshi’s cries of shock, Roddy did not hesitate to pick up a beam rifle that looked similar to the one that Fujino Masayoshi was using earlier.

The only difference between the two was that the casing for this beam rifle was not installed, leaving part of the weapon bare.

“What is this?”

Underneath the weapon, in the interior of the cabinet that was illuminated by rows of light, there was an object placed upon the surface. Roddy found it and carefully picked it up.

It resembled a square shaped solar panel. However... upon its surface was a crystal the size of a grain of rice.

The crystal was pale orange in colour, translucent and extremely pure.

Pinching it with his hand and examining it carefully, he saw that there were faint stripes inside, which flashed like the stars.

“This... this is the energy source,” Fujino Masayoshi was on the verge of tearing up.

“Energy source? You people created this energy source?” Roddy stared with wide-open eyes.

“No... we do not have that ability,” Fujino Masayoshi’s eyes darted around and he hesitated to continue.

Roddy simply placed the military knife onto Fujino Masayoshi’s neck. “You may choose to not say anything, I will give you three seconds to consider.”

“... these were all cut out from the prototype machine!” With a knife placed beside his neck, Fujino Masayoshi’s speed of speech became three times faster.

“Prototype machine?” Chen Xiaolian caught on to that important word. “What is that?”

“That... that is top secret!” Fujino Masayoshi cried out. “If I reveal information about it, I will be put to death for treason!”

“If you do not spit it out, then you will die now,” Roddy put on a savage face.

“Wu wu wu wu... I cannot tell you... I really cannot tell you... wu wu wu wu...” Fujino Masayoshi broke down. He slumped down onto the ground, held his head and cried out bitterly.

It was then...

BOOM!

The door was struck again!

This time, the concrete wall on the two sides of the vault door had clearly become deformed from the impact! Small fragments fell down from the wall.

Moreover, even the thick metal vault door was slightly deformed. The inward deformation of the vault door was noticeable to even the naked eye!

“The gate won’t hold it for much longer!” Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes.

“Use this gun to deal with it!” Roddy picked up the beam rifle that Fujino Masayoshi had used earlier and utilized his Mechanical Heart to help him gain understanding on how to operate the weapon.

He rotated the butt of the rifle and the energy source was quickly activated. The charge indicator lights lit up one by one.

After twenty seconds, all the charge indicator lights were turned on and the rifle could now be fired at any moment.

Chen Xiaolian exhaled. “We will do it like this. We cannot let it bust down the door and break in! We will go together... you open the door for me to shoot at it. I will fire out one shot at it first!

“It would be for the best if we could finish it off! But if it cannot... close the door. It should still buy us some time!”

“... we’ll follow your plan!” Roddy clenched his teeth.

Roddy handed the beam rifle to Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian held onto the beam rifle and familiarized himself with the weapon for a moment before moving forward with Roddy to the vault door.

Roddy stood beside the vault door and pressed his hand on the surface of the electronic panel.

“On the count of three, I will open the door and you will open fire. One, two THREE!”

Beep!

After Roddy activated his skill, the vault door slowly rose up.

Chen Xiaolian had already placed his body in a prostrating position on the ground.

When the vault door was raised up by around 30 cm, a huge, black coloured, spherical body slammed heavily onto the door!

The vault door shook with severity and more cracks appeared on the two sides of the wall.

Chen Xiaolian already has a clear view of the outside!

The size of the giant toad was much larger now than before. It has expanded into something that resembled a giant meatball. It opened its mouth as it faced Chen Xiaolian and extended its crimson coloured tongue out, viscous liquid spilling out from its mouth.

NOW!

Chen Xiaolian roared out to himself!

He fired the beam rifle!

A translucent beam of pale orange coloured light charged out from the muzzle of the weapon! The beam landed accurately onto the body of the giant toad!

This time, his attack was not bounced off like the bullets from ordinary firearms.

The beam of light struck the giant toad's body, piercing its way through!

Chen Xiaolian lightly moved both his hands, slightly lifting up the muzzle of the weapon.

The beam of light suddenly became a blade of light!

The beam of light had already pierced through the toad's body. Now that the muzzle was lifted up, the beam of light too moved upward.

Chi!

Around one quarter or less of the giant toad's body was cut out by the beam of light!

The giant toad's body that was originally swollen like a balloon suddenly ejected a vast amount of viscous liquid! The internal organs

from the interior of its body also spilled out from the cut...

The resulting image was reminiscent of a ball of water that was just cut!

Additionally, the force behind the beam of light lifted the giant toad's body and tossed it away. The giant toad's body was sent flying over ten meters away before slamming onto the wall.

The giant toad's body suddenly shrank down to one third of its earlier size!

"We did it!" Chen Xiaolian shouted, pleasantly surprised by the outcome.

However, he suddenly observed movement on the giant toad's body. On the part that was cut off, its flesh moved at a rapid pace, bonding together automatically and forcing the blood and viscous liquid to stop flowing out. The toad's body returned to the form of a ball – even so, it was apparent that it had deflated somewhat.

The toad let loose a loud roar and its body bounced forward!

Chen Xiaolian's eyes widened and he pulled the trigger one more time. However, the weapon did not fire!

He immediately recalled Fujino Masayoshi's words... after firing, it would require at least twenty seconds to recharge.

"Damn it! Roddy, close the door! Hurry!"

Roddy immediately closed the vault door. As the vault door was falling down, the toad pounced forward. During the final moment when the vault door was shutting down, the toad's body slammed onto the surface of the vault door! Unfortunately for the toad, it was still unable to get inside.

"Son of a bitch!" Chen Xiaolian let go of the weapon and sighed. "This weapon is certainly useful, but... if only we could fire another round at it."

"Look around! See if there are any other weapons! We will take it to kill off that damnable toad!" Roddy said furiously.

At that same moment...

BOOM!

A loud noise reverberated from the outside.

...

The giant toad's body was smashed backward and it slammed onto the wall!

Its body shrivelled, its mouth opened wide and vast amount of viscous liquid poured out. Its internal organs were among those pouring out.

Then, a foot lashed out, striking onto the toad's body!

The toad's body burst out like a popped balloon! Its body exploded outward and viscous liquid sprayed out everywhere.

The fishy stench of the viscous liquid permeated the entire corridor.

Tian Lie rubbed his bald head. Then, he looked at the viscous liquid sticking to his hand; he leaned forward and sniffed it.

"It truly is a nightmarish stench."

He turned around and regarded the deformed vault door standing before him.

At this moment, Tian Lie looked just like a metal man!

All four limbs and even his body were now exhibiting a faint silvery, metallic glow.

Tian Lie sneered. He then turned around to examine the toad for a while before stretching out a finger.

A metal blade emerged from his fingertip.

When examined closely, one would discover that the metal blade was not static. Instead, it was lightly vibrating.

A buzzing sound emerged and... "chi"!

The metal blade pierced through the toad's mouth, cutting its way out through the side!

Seeing that the toad was finally dead, Tian Lie grunted. He turned

around and moved toward the vault door.

Standing before the vault door, Tia Lie exhaled, raised his right hand and smashed it forward.

BOOM!

...

The vault door was severely deformed from the resulting impact! The entire metal door took on a concave shape.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy glanced at each other. “What is going on?”

Next, they heard a terrifyingly familiar voice.

“Little rabbits, be obedient and open the door. Hurry up and open the door, Sir Tian Lie wants to enter! Hahahahahaha! Little angel, I have caught up to you!”

Fujino Masayoshi, raw: ‘藤野义’, pinyin: ‘téng yě yì’.

Chapter 147: Prototype Machine

“It is... Tian Lie!” Roddy’s eyes were bulging out.

“The Angel Killer!” Chen Xiaolian’s face sank.

Tian Lie’s powerful voice was actually capable of penetrating through the thick metal vault door, just like that of a devil.

Who knew what kind of technique he was using.

Unless... it was as Nicole had said... he could transform his body into a stream of data?

“He... how could he have caught up to us here?” Roddy stared with widened eyes.

“Clearly... this fellow is much tougher than we had imagined!” Chen Xiaolian spat out furiously. “Hurry up and go!”

The both of them ran back to Fujino Masayoshi’s side and heard another loud bang coming from behind them.

BOOM!

This time, the impact caused the middle part of the vault door to twist inward!

The bottom area had clearly been pried open slightly. Light could be seen spilling inside from the other side.

“Guild Leader, what is that...”

“Shut up!” Roddy cut off Nagase Komi’s question.

Chen Xiaolian grabbed hold onto Fujino Masayoshi. “Is there any other exit here?”

“Eh? No...” Fujino Masayoshi’s face distorted in distress. “If there was another way, I would have ran off and not end up being trapped inside...”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes were blood shot. He swivelled around and examined the demonstration hall. He then pointed toward another vault door. “Where does the door lead to?”

“That... I cannot enter... I do not have the clearance!” Fujino Masayoshi’s face grew more distressed. “I am telling the truth! I do not have the clearance to open that door... my status is not high enough! I am really not lying!”

Clearance?

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy glanced at each other, their eyes lighting up.

No clearance? Fret not! Roddy is here!

“Hurry!”

Without bothering to give an explanation, Chen Xiaolian dragged Fujino Masayoshi up and the four of them charged toward the door.

Roddy quickly utilized his Mechanical Heart upon the door and it was opened.

Fujino Masayoshi stared with bulging eyes. Seeing Roddy’s miraculous act of opening the door, he was left speechless.

Chen Xiaolian was surprised to find that there was no passageway or stairs of sort behind the door.

Instead, they found...

Something that resembled an elevator?

However, this elevator was oval in shape.

“Hurry up and enter!”

The four of them rushed inside and Chen Xiaolian quickly pressed the green button on the left wall of the elevator.

Weng!

The elevator shook for a bit and the doors then quickly closed.

During the final moment when the doors were closing up... Chen Xiaolian spied the deformed metal vault door being blasted off!

Tian Lie’s shining bald head emerged through the doorway. His imposingly robust body was glowing with a silvery metal sheen. He

stepped forward, his gaze falling onto them.

Weng!

The doors closed up.

Next, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt the 'elevator' accelerating. With a "weng", it catapulted forward!

It turned out to be some form of railway car, speeding rapidly through a tunnel!

The gravitational pressure that resembled those evident when an aircraft was ascending could be clearly felt.

"This... where does this tunnel lead to?" Chen Xiaolian grabbed onto Fujino Masayoshi.

Fujino Masayoshi was terrified and he quavered. "It... it is the warehouse for the prototype machine! Heavens! I will be shot to death for this! I do not have the clearance to enter that place!"

...

BOOM!

After his punch had sent the closed door flying, Tian Lie caught sight of the oval shaped tunnel inside.

"You really do know how to run!" Tian Lie licked his lips. "I just love this hunting game! My dear prey, here I come!"

After saying that, Tian Lie jumped into the tunnel. Taking a deep breath, he took off, sprinting madly through the tunnel!

...

Weng...

The pod shook and they could clearly feel it decelerating.

After the pod has stopped, its doors slowly opened up.

The four of them quickly ran out from the pod and Chen Xiaolian quickly said. "We need to hurry up and move! That fellow will be catching

up to us soon!”

Before them was a double door. Roddy’s face appeared pale as he opened the door. Then, his body staggered. Chen Xiaolian went forward to prop him up. “What happened?”

“I have been using my skill too much. I feel a little weak,” Roddy frowned. “It seems I may soon be reaching my limit.”

“We need to find a way out of here as fast as possible!” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

“I can still walk on my own. There is no need for you to help me.”

After saying that, Roddy gave a faint smile. In his hand was another beam weapon taken from the demonstration hall. “If that baldy catches up to us, then we will let him have a taste of this weapon.”

After the doors were opened, Chen Xiaolian and the others were shocked by what lay before their eyes...

This place... appeared like a huge... warehouse?

The ceiling was shaped like a dome with a height of over 30 meters!

This place was simply a giant underground warehouse!

Its walls, floor, all of it exuded a metallic lustre.

Smooth and spotless!

The humming sound of vents came from up above their heads.

This giant warehouse was extremely immense and dark. Only the gate area was set up with luminescent lights. However, the illumination from those lights was too weak and they were unable to see too far ahead.

“This is... just what is this place?” Roddy took a deep breath. “They actually built such a large space under the ground.”

“This is... this is the research institute’s most confidential area. Not even the Japanese Prime Minister has the clearance to enter this place...” Fujino Masayoshi appeared on the verge of crying. He gripped his head tightly. “I am so dead! I am definitely dead! I will be shot to death! I won’t

even be given the chance to commit seppuku... wu wu wu wu wu wu wu wu wu..."

"Most confidential?" Roddy's eyes flashed. "Is this the prototype machine that you mentioned? What is that thing?"

"Do not ask me that! I have never stepped foot inside this place," Fujino Masayoshi cried out. "I have been here for nine years, but I have never entered this place! The tunnel we came through was one specifically made for researchers. One that I have never once came through! I... wu wu wu wu wu..."

"Shut up! Hurry up and move it!" Roddy kicked Fujino Masayoshi from the back. "If not for us, you would have died for sure! If you want to die, then wait until you get out of here. Can't you think for yourself?"

The four of them walked inside the warehouse for a moment. Chen Xiaolian retrieved a tactical flashlight and took the vanguard position.

After walking for around 100 meters...

The warehouse was filled with an assortment of items, various metal desks, metal devices, lift trucks...

After reaching the end...

They found a closed metal door that was over 30 meters in height.

The gigantic metal door stood before them, exuding a majestic atmosphere that pressed down upon them.

"What is behind this door?" Chen Xiaolian's eyes were bulged wide. "How could there be such a huge door?"

Doors were usually made based on the size of the object that was required to go through the door!

As for this door, it was made to be 30 meters high... the only explanation for this would be that it needed to allow an immensely huge object through it. Thus, the construction of such a gigantic door was necessary.

"Inside? Inside rests the prototype machine!" Fujino Masayoshi snappily

shook his head. It appeared that he believed his death to be a certainty. Thus, he displayed a harsh attitude, one that was filled with indifference.

“There are words here,” Roddy suddenly raised his tactical flashlight, sweeping the beam of light over.

On the left side of the door was a metal nameplate with characters written on its surface. The characters formed two lines of text, one in Japanese and one in English.

“What is written on it?” Chen Xiaolian who was standing behind Roddy was not too concerned about it.

“...” Roddy did not say anything. However, his body began to tremble uncontrollably!

“What happened?” Chen Xiaolian was shocked and he quickly grabbed hold of Roddy’s shoulder. “Are you all right?”

“I... I am fine!” Roddy’s voice was slightly quavering from overexcitement and he stared at the nameplate that hung on the wall and carefully re-read it three times. After ascertaining that he had not made a mistake, he exhaled.

“I... if this is a dream, I truly hope I never wake up from this dream!” Roddy suddenly displayed an expression of someone who was close to breaking out in tears.

Roddy suddenly turned around and grabbed hold of Fujino Masayoshi. “Speak! The thing inside is the prototype machine? How is that possible? How could you possibly create something like this? How could you possibly have that level of technology?”

Fujino Masayoshi’s face revealed a bitter expression. “We? Of course, we do not possess the ability to create this item! This prototype machine was not created by us!”

“... it... where did it come from?” Roddy took a deep breath, his eyes focusing onto Fujino Masayoshi.

“It...” Fujino Masayoshi gulped. Roddy’s stare caused an instinctive

sense of fear to engulf him.

This Japanese scientist said with a trembling voice. "I... truth is, I have never seen it before. I just do not have that type of clearance."

"I asked you where it came from!"

"I..." Fujino Masayoshi's voice was quavering. "I..."

"If you do not say it, I will kill you right now!"

"I..." Fujino Masayoshi covered his head and replied. "I really do not know! All I know is that, this thing was found several years ago from deep under the sea! It was after World War II, when our government sent out salvage ships to salvage some sunken warships that sank during naval warfare..."

"They inadvertently found this thing!"

"Hell if I know where this thing came from! This technology simply should not exist on this Earth! The top scientists of our country have studied it for decades! Generations after generations!"

"In order to cover it up, all the people from the salvage ships were rounded up! Some were directly killed off!"

"Why?" Chen Xiaolian frowned.

"So that this information does not leak out!" Fujino Masayoshi's expression turned somewhat mournful. "Considering the situation of our country... if its existence gets leaked, would we be able to keep it? The Americans would be the first to forcibly snatch it away from us!"

"Thus, it has always been our most confidential secret... I have only heard about it and have never had the chance to see it at all! Additionally, the government also disseminated at least twenty or more versions of varying rumours to keep its existence a secret!"

"What secret nuclear weapon research and development base, what secret nuclear energy research institute..."

"We built this underground base in the 1990s in order to study it! In order to deceive the public, we created the huge project known as the

Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel!

“This place is 300 meters underground! Above our heads is a layer of concrete as thick as ten football fields!

“The weapons you saw in the demonstration hall earlier... they were all reverse engineered products made from studying it!

“However, even until this day, we are unable to grasp the technology behind it! We do not even understand most of the principles behind it!

“The weapons you see in the demonstration hall are all shoddy imitations of it. We cannot even create a suitable metallic material! We cannot even use its weapon! Because the strength of our metals are not strong enough! We cannot even research a way to reverse engineer out that type of alloy!

“After conducting elemental analysis on it, we found that there are at least 30 kinds of elements there that did not belong to the periodic table that our human technology established!

“The beam rifle in your hand is an imitation weapon, reverse engineered after we conducted research on it.

“However, we can only fire it out once every twenty seconds. Additionally, it can only be fired three times. After which the energy control device would overload and become scrap.

“However, that energy crystal... was cut out from it!

“The energy crystal that you picked up earlier... we were simply incapable of figuring out what that thing is. We were barely able to cut out a small part of it for analysis.

“In order to analyse the components within it, one large central computer would burn itself in the process of trying almost every year!”

“Energy source...” Chen Xiaolian suddenly thought of something.

He quickly retrieved something out from the system!

This was the item he had acquired from the previous phase of this Tokyo instance dungeon, one of the five energy sources!

Seeing the energy source that was the size of a cigarette box in Chen Xiaolian's hand, Fujino Masayoshi became utterly shocked.

Fujino Masayoshi stared with bulging eyes. "You you you you! Where did you get that thing? You, you... just who are you people?"

Panicking, Fujino Masayoshi could only stutter.

As for Chen Xiaolian, his own level of shock was not small either.

Energy source...

As expected, it has a close relationship with the final quest of this instance dungeon.

This item that the system had distributed to them was not a useless decoration!

This energy source with a faint metallic glow...

Chen Xiaolian suppressed his own emotions and turned to Roddy. Chen Xiaolian slowly said. "Roddy, what exactly does the name plate say?"

Chen Xiaolian could see those words clearly now. However, those words were extremely hard to pronounce... at the very least, he did not understand what those words meant when written together.

Roddy's expression grew increasingly peculiar.

Rather than being described as excitement, it would be better to describe it as...

Longing! And also... reverence!

"Fujino Masayoshi! The name written on the name plate. Did you people come up with that name?" Roddy suddenly forced out a smile.

"Yes... it is how we address it."

"Hmmm, is this... a coincidence?" Roddy sighed.

Chen Xiaolian frowned. "Just what exactly is written on it?"

"The words written on it is..." Roddy swallowed his saliva and said slowly with a voice bordering on devotion. Its Chinese meaning is: Quán

ling yù fàn yòng lián xù qiáng huà xíng jī dòng bīng qì.”

Next, he slowly spoke out the English text:

“General_Unilateral_Neuro-link_Dispersive_Autonomic_Maneuver.”

“... why is the English name so hard to pronounce?”

Roddy forced out a smile. “Just put the first letter of each word together and read it out to understand.”

“G-U-N-D-A-M... ..” Chen Xiaolian’s face became one of amazement.

“Holy mother of shit!”

...

[Author’s Note: Phew! I am finally here! I am so excited ah!].

[TL: Kitaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!! Err, that means ‘It has ARRIVED!!!’]

Chapter 148: Mech!

Chen Xiaolian, Roddy, Nagase Komi and even Fujino Masayoshi stood right there. All four of them had their heads raised up as they observed the giant, 30-meter high door that was slowly opening up.

As the door opened, lights automatically lit up and the colossal object was revealed...

All four of them reacted in near identical fashion. They simply stood there in a daze for a long time, incapable of saying anything.

...

Magnificent! Spectacular! Beautiful!

That was the first feeling to well up as they feasted their eyes upon it!

A humanoid Mech with a height of nearly twenty meters stood inside the hangar.

There were supporting and securing metal frames on both sides to keep this Mech in a standing posture.

Its body form closely resembled the human body, with a sleek body shape; its complete body frame was filled with lines, which accentuated its sense of beauty!

The coating on its exterior was bright blue in colour with faint silvery white lines in between.

There were more than ten thick cables attached to the surface of its body. The other end of the cables were then connected somewhere into the walls.

There was a standing computer desk set up by the hangar door. Roddy was the first to run over. He switched on the computer while both hands moved, tapping the buttons on the keyboard.

With Roddy's Mechanical Heart skill, it did not matter if this computer has certain password requirements for it. None of them could bar Roddy from prying open its secrets.

Soon enough, a three-dimensional design of the humanoid Mech appeared upon the computer screen.

Fujino Masayoshi was feeling highly excited. At this moment, this PhD holder in Electronic Engineering appeared to have recovered his instinctive yearning toward technology. Matters regarding him being 'shot to death' and 'responsibility' were temporarily forgotten.

Fujino Masayoshi greedily shoved himself beside Roddy and he stared at the screen. Both his eyes were glistening and he murmured. "I finally get to see it, I finally get to see it... it has been nine years! I finally get to see it! I am finally standing right beside it!"

For Fujino Masayoshi, this moment would be the ultimate moment in his life.

Nine years ago, he was a budding scientist in the field of research. After this research institute recruited him, he felt that he had been sucked into a completely new field.

Within these nine years, he improved his position step by step. One day, he finally came to learn about the existence of this 'prototype machine'. He found out about this secret prototype machine, one that was hailed as a priceless treasure by the Mechanical Faction.

The vast amount of research and work that he did all revolved around this prototype machine. Most of his time was spent researching and analysing how to reverse engineer and imitate the technological achievements of the prototype machine.

Unfortunately, with the limitations imposed by the standard technology available within the current world, their attempts to reverse engineer it faced too much difficulties.

The gap they faced in trying to solve the riddle presented by this prototype machine with the current world's level of technology was like having a civilization whose warriors rode on horses and fight with swords try to explain the mechanics behind a jet-propelled aircraft!

The countless times when they were faced with failure, the sense of

helplessness, the constant struggles, all of those stemmed from their attempts to just circle around 'its' existence!

However, the thing that brought the most regret to Fujino Masayoshi was that, even after nine years, his level of clearance was still insufficient for him to come close to catching a glimpse of it! His clearance could not give him the privilege to touch it!

No, forget touching. He could not even get a glimpse of it!

The work type that Fujino Masayoshi had gotten accustomed to was: His research team would be assigned with a piece of technological detail that they will work on, researching and attempting to reverse engineer it. Just like a blind man trying to feel out the pieces, he never had the chance to witness the entire picture.

Today however, this wish of his finally came true!

Roddy's eyes were shining as he stared at the three-dimensional design displayed upon the surface of the screen.

"Body height of 18.5 meters,

"Weight of 88 tons.

"Model: Type-001— Hmm, this should be the handle given to it by the staff member of this research institute.

"Armour material: Alloy (composition unknown)

"Weapon system: Retractable beam blade, energy beam discharge weapons, others unknown.

"Power system: Unknown energy source."

After seeing that, Roddy suddenly gave an "eh". He turned around and glanced at Fujino Masayoshi. "You installed some strange foreign weapons system on it?"

"Errr..." Fujino Masayoshi was lost for words for a moment. Then he let out a strained smile. "This was one of our attempts to imitate it. Since we were unable to fully replicate its weapons system, we installed those weapons in order to help us with our objective of imitating it. By

installing our own weapon system onto it, we will be able to gather real time data analysis during simulations tests. That is why...”

Roddy pursed his lips to the side and did not express any opinion on the matter. He continued to read.

The Mechanical Faction had installed some additional weapons onto the exterior of the Mech. These weapons were all military weapons with technology from the current world. Of course, these weapons were all cutting-edge weapons.

“Tiger Fang, a short-range air to air combat missile, four.

“Tiger Roar, a multi-barrelled cannon, one. Installed on the left shoulder area, automatic thermal sight system.

“Throwing type, Electronic Pulse Bomb...”

Seeing that last entry, Roddy could not restrain himself and made a face. “Are you planning on using this Mech as a heavy fighter?”

Fujino Masayoshi however, remained calm. “That is because we were unable to extract any specific parameters from it, thus everything remains in the testing stage. It would be more accurate to say that, ever since we acquired this prototype machine, we have been unable to control it. We could not even open it up! For tens of years, it has been placed within this warehouse. We do not even know how its battle mode would look like.”

Chen Xiaolian let out a low whistle and mumbled in a low voice. “We should bring them to Zero City and let them take a look at how those mechs do battle.”

“We cannot even take it apart in our attempt to conduct research on it. Its external armour is so hard that we were simply incapable of breaking through it. At present, all of our research is focused on locating a non-critical part of the armour. Then, we will proceed to cut a part out and use it for reverse engineering research. However, the cost involved in this process is extremely high,” Fujino Masayoshi gave a distressed smile. “From what I can gather, each time they make a cut, they will end up

scrapping at least ten super powered instruments. Each of those instruments cost several million US dollars to manufacture.

“Simply put, we do not even know how it operates. All of it remains unknown to us.

“It is just like facing an elephant. What we have been doing for the past tens of years was just to conduct research on certain parts of the elephant, like its legs. We were unable to even open up its main body parts!”

“What are those cables for?” Chen Xiaolian suddenly pointed at the thick cables connected to the surface of the Mech.

“That... is to make use of its energy,” Fujino Masayoshi hesitated for a moment and forced out another smile. “Truth be told... this underground base of ours, all the energy needed for its operation is ‘stolen’ from its body.”

“What?” Roddy was shocked.

“Its energy is extremely immense. Back then, you saw that energy particle that we cut out from it. Truth be told, that energy particle is just a residual part that came out when we were cutting into its external weapon. Its real energy source is something we could never find. All we know is that this energy source is immense. According to our calculations, the energy of this Mech is comparable to a small nuclear power plant – possibly higher.

“The undertaking going on within this underground base is very big. Additionally, in order for us to maintain the operations of this underground base, we need a vast amount of energy. As you all might know, we Japan, is a country lacking in energy.

“The earliest plan involved building a nuclear power plant to maintain the operation of this secret base. However, after some research, the upper management found an even better method. That method is...”

“That method is to make use of this Mech like one would use a very big battery?” Roddy could not help himself and he smiled.

“Correct,” Fujino Masayoshi’s expression was solemn. “The process of extracting its energy had taken a huge amount of effort. We cut its external weapon system and successfully made a connection with its energy. Only then were we able to channel out its energy.

“To our surprise, its energy was immense and seemed almost inexhaustible!

“We were extremely shocked. This meant that its energy was either extremely immense or... it possesses self-regenerating properties.

“At any rate, since the day this underground base was set up until this day, a time period of over ten years, we have always been using its energy. Moreover, it has never been depleted. We suspect that our usage of its energy within the last ten plus years has never reached the maximum limit that it could provide.”

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy turned to look at one another.

Chen Xiaolian then whispered out. “It seems... we should be able to complete our quest. This should be the quest target set by the system, the research results of the Mechanical Faction, right?”

“I feel like I just hit the jackpot,” Roddy was grinning with squinted eyes.

“Do not be too happy just yet. We now have two problems before us,” Chen Xiaolian said in a heavy tone of voice. “First, that Tian Lie will be catching up to us at any moment. Additionally, this place probably will not have any other exit. This place is the secret warehouse. It would not have much entrances and exits.

“The second problem... did you forget about the self-destruct sequence? The one hour countdown... how long do we have left?”

Roddy’s face sank and he checked the time. “There is still... 37 minutes!”

“At the present, we face the question: Under what condition will we be considered to have ‘acquired’ it? What do we need to do to clear the quest condition set by the system? We are currently standing before it, but the system is not giving us any response at all,” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“... I will go up and give it a try!” Roddy made up his mind, his eyes burning with desire. He pointed toward the elevator on the support frame. “I will climb up and then I will try to use my skill on it.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “Be careful!”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian’s face turned solemn. “I know you really like this big guy... however, I am going to remind you, do not forcibly try to use your ‘Mechanical Heart’ to control it! Its level of technology and Class is clearly very high. As for your skill, its Class is very low. This thing is not some ordinary stuff like electronic doors or electronic locks. I fear that your skill would prove lacking, causing you to get hurt if you force yourself in your attempt to control this thing!”

“Do not worry!”

Chapter 149: Test of Luck

Roddy laughed before turning around to face the metal support's lift. He got on the lift and pressed the button upon it, causing the lift to slowly rise up, bringing Roddy upward to the upper half area of the Mech.

Chen Xiaolian then turned around to look at Fujino Masayoshi. "Does this place have anything else? Considering how big this warehouse is, surely it does not only house this Mech, right?"

"Err... there should be a weapon armoury here. Those weapons are all meant for military testing, especially the military weapon devices. Those are used to debug the resulting data. They should be somewhere in another warehouse within this area."

Looking around, Chen Xiaolian found much of what he needed from a small-scale weapons warehouse located roughly 50 meters away from the Mech warehouse.

Nagase Komi watched as Chen Xiaolian picked up a 20mm gatling-style rotary cannon with his hands – Chen Xiaolian was never a tall person to begin with. For someone like him to be carrying the rotary cannon like a Terminator, the image he exhibited was one of awkwardness.

However, his bodily attributes have been enhanced to [B] Class. Thanks to that, the act of carrying the huge rotary cannon was not a problem for him. The long line of ammunition belt hung over Chen Xiaolian's body and dangled down onto the floor.

Additionally, he stuffed in a good number of hand grenades onto his tactical vest.

Chen Xiaolian also picked out a Howa Type automatic rifle for Nagase Komi; it was one that could be installed with grenade launchers.

After busying himself with the weapons for around five to six minutes, Chen Xiaolian turned around to look at the Mech. "Roddy?"

Chen Xiaolian called out twice, but no reply was forthcoming.

...

Roddy stood upon the lift as he moved it to stop before the chest area of the Mech.

Standing there, Roddy raised his head to look at the head of the Mech. The coating of the head was a mix of blue, black and silver colours, which looked exceptionally clear.

The external armour of the Mech was tightly melded together. Even its joints did not reveal any gap in between, causing him to be at a loss at how this technology was able to achieve that.

The material used for the external armour of the Mech was extremely durable. Extending his hand to feel it, he felt a cold sensation that was equivalent to ice.

Roddy even produced a military knife to swipe across the surface of the Mech a few times. However, the sharp military knife was unable to leave any trace on the surface of the Mech!

“This is definitely not a level of technology that this world should possess,” Roddy let out a sigh.

At that moment, he felt himself losing control over his mind.

It was as though there was an irrepressible impulse surging through him, slowly guiding his hand out to press onto the surface of the Mech.

Although Chen Xiaolian had warned him not to, at this moment, Roddy could not suppress the impulse within his heart.

Roddy activated his skill!

Mechanical Heart!

...

Weng!

It was as though an extensive amount of information was being crammed into his consciousness as streams of data inundated Roddy's mind, just like waterfall!

The feeling was akin to having a person tossed into the confines of a

giant bell before proceeding to ring the bell!

Roddy could feel humming sounds reverberating through the inside of his ears, throwing him into a spiral of dizziness.

In that instant, a consciousness seemed to have appeared within his mind.

“What. Are. You?”

Hmm?

...

Chen Xiaolian ran to the area beneath the Mech and raised his head to look upward.

He saw Roddy standing upon the raised lift, his body leaning forward and one hand was placed onto the surface of the Mech.

Once again, Chen Xiaolian called out twice toward Roddy. However, he saw that Roddy was not responding.

Chen Xiaolian immediately sensed that something bad was happening.

That fellow's chuunibyou syndrome was acting up again! Roddy had ignored his warning!

“Roddy!”

Chen Xiaolian howled loudly. Then, he picked up a hammer from the nearby tool station and smashed it onto the rails of the lift a few times.

Clanging sounds echoed throughout the warehouse. However, Roddy who was standing on the lift continued to show zero response.

“Damn it!”

Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly and looked at the rails of the lift. He spat out fiercely and his arms and legs began to move, climbing up the rail.

After Chen Xiaolian reached the lift, he leapt over the fence of the lift and landed on it. As he was trying to pull Roddy over, he suddenly found Roddy's body to be abnormally heavy!

Roddy's entire body appeared stiff and he was glued stubbornly onto the Mech!

Chen Xiaolian tried pulling him a few times but Roddy's hand appeared to be firmly stuck onto the surface of the Mech, not showing any sign of movement at all.

Chen Xiaolian's heart became tense and he exerted more strength through his hands in his attempt to pull Roddy over. Still, he was unable to move Roddy.

What is going on here? Chen Xiaolian cursed inwardly.

Chen Xiaolian smacked Roddy's back a couple of times, attempting to wake him up. However, this fellow remained in a comatose state.

"Damn it!" Chen Xiaolian shouted in anger.

Then, as his hand slapped down onto Roddy's back once more...

A whooshing sound was issued out!

A bizarre scene took place before Chen Xiaolian!

The colossal Mech abruptly disappeared into thin air!

A gigantic steel Mech with a height of 18 meters suddenly transformed into a beam of light and vanished from sight.

Roddy was originally leaning forward out of the lift and onto the Mech. Now that the Mech had disappeared, Roddy's body suddenly arched forward and fell down the lift. Thankfully, Chen Xiaolian's reaction speed was fast enough. His hand shot out to grab Roddy's arm, stopping his fall. Roddy's body was thus left hanging from the lift. Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly again and pulled Roddy up onto the lift.

What in the son of a bitch is going on here?

A mech that is so gigantic could disappear just like that?

Then, Chen Xiaolian suddenly saw a notification coming in from the system.

[System prompt: Your Meteor Rock Guild has seized the research

results of the Mechanical Faction!].

[System prompt: Please leave the research institute before the self-destruct countdown reaches zero. Then, you may leave this instance dungeon.].

[System prompt: In order to complete this instance dungeon's final quest, please protect the technological result acquired before you leave this instance dungeon. The system reward will be calculated after the instance dungeon is over.].

Holy shit!

What is going on here?

Chen Xiaolian looked at Roddy with an expression of surprise: It seems this fellow caused the disappearance of the Mech.

Seized the research results of the Mechanical Faction?

Chen Xiaolian felt pleasantly surprised. He was overjoyed to know that they had managed to complete the quest.

However, he was surprised because... Roddy was still unconscious, just like a coma patient. If not for the fact that Roddy was still breathing, Chen Xiaolian would have thought that this fellow had kicked the bucket!

"Roddy! Roddy!" Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation in slapping Roddy's face a few times. Roddy's breathing remained deep and stable, but he remained unconscious.

"Damn it!" Chen Xiaolian cursed out once again and he got the lift they were on to descend to the ground.

After the lift had reached the ground, Chen Xiaolian brought Roddy down from the lift.

"We need to leave this place immediately! We still have less than half an hour remaining!"

Chen Xiaolian said to Nagase Komi.

The expression on Nagase Komi's face was one of utter anxiousness.

She too had received the notification from the system.

“Fujino Masayoshi!” Chen Xiaolian pulled Fujino Masayoshi over with one hand. “Is there any other passage here?”

“Err...” Fujino Masayoshi replied in a state of stupefaction.

“There must be one!” Chen Xiaolian said coldly. “There are so many large-scale equipment here. There are also instruments and weapons! In order to move all those items in here, how could there not be any passageway? Not only that, it must also be a large sized passageway!”

“There is indeed one, but...” Fujino Masayoshi’s face revealed a bitter expression. “But that passageway cannot be opened!”

“How could it not be opened?” Chen Xiaolian’s face was grim. “Even if we have to blow it up, we will force it open!”

“It is useless,” Fujino Masayoshi suddenly extended his hand outward, pointing at the ceiling. “The passageway is just above us!”

Above us?

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

“I only know that there should be a lift on top. The ceiling of this warehouse can be opened to reveal a station for the transportation of goods. Unfortunately... that station for the transportation of goods cannot be destroyed. Because...”

Fujino Masayoshi’s subsequent answer caused Chen Xiaolian to simmer with rage.

“Our current location is in fact, not underneath the island of Japan. Rather... the sea! It would be more accurate to say that we are currently underneath the continental shelf. If you want to get out of here, you need to break through the ceiling of this warehouse. This underground project site do indeed have a station for the transportation of goods. On normal days, in order to deceive the public, the military submarine will be used to enter the sea. Then, utilizing the underwater mode, the station for transportation of goods will allow the submarine to transport the goods

inside.

“Let me put it this way.

“We constructed a transportation channel on the seabed that is 4 km in length. As its name implies, this transportation channel is used for transportation purposes. While positioned underwater, those large-scale equipment will first be sealed properly before being sent down the transportation channel. Well slots filled with seawater will be used here.

“The transportation process is as follows: The supplies are first sent into the transportation channel. The supplies will then move through the 4 km channel while remaining underwater until it reaches a large-scale transportation platform. After the supplies reach the large-scale platform, we will open up a sealed module for it. Sealing up the transportation platform, the waters in the sealed module is then drained out. After that is done, the supplies can then be moved inside here directly from the transportation platform.

“Even if you insist on using force to destroy your way out... for example, through the use of bombs that you suggested... you would only be able to reach the well-sealed transportation platform. That place is an underwater hold. Even after reaching there, you still cannot get out!

“In order to use that way to escape from here, you must go through the 4 km transportation channel!

“We cannot use bombs. If we do, it will cause the transportation channel and the continental shelf to collapse. When that happens, all of us will be buried under the seabed!”

Underwater?

Seabed?

Chen Xiaolian's eyes bulged out.

“F**k! I should have known that the system would never give an easy quest!” Chen Xiaolian gave a resentful smile.

Chen Xiaolian pondered their predicament for a moment before

glancing at Fujino Masayoshi. “Are there any diving equipment here?”

“There are,” Fujino Masayoshi quickly answered. “There are diving suits and small-scaled submersible vehicles that are also installed with propellers. The maintenance crew responsible for the maintenance of the transportation platform and the transportation channel uses those equipment. Those maintenance works requires going underwater.”

“That will work!” Chen Xiaolian’s heart was overjoyed.

“But...” Fujino Masayoshi gave another bitter smile. “The transportation platform above us is certainly filled with sea water! We must first set the controls to let the transportation platform drain out the seawater. Only after doing that will we be able to climb up. If we do not, once we open the platform... the seawater will gush in.”

“Then go drain the water!” Chen Xiaolian became vexed. “Stop slacking around with all those nonsense! We must hurry! We have already activated the self-destruct sequence. We only have... 26 minutes left!”

Chapter 150: I Hear You Have An Immortal Body?

“...” Hearing that, Fujino Masayoshi’s eyes turned dark and he plopped down onto the ground in a seated position.

At that moment, all the lights illuminating the entire warehouse area were suddenly turned off!

The interior of the warehouse was abruptly plunged into utter darkness.

A few seconds after that, faint emergency lights on the walls slowly lit up.

“What on earth is happening?”

Chen Xiaolian caught Fujino Masayoshi up and asked. “What just happened?”

“En... energy...” Fujino Masayoshi’s face was pale as he answered. “Energy!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly understood what he meant.

Energy! !

This underground base was originally utilizing the Mech as a large-scale battery to power its operations.

Presently, the Mech has been sent by Roddy to who knew where... as such... the base has lost its battery!

Without the Mech here to act as a source of energy for this underground base, this entire place has lost all power!

“The small-scale backup generator will start up automatically. However, the generator will only be able to provide enough energy for some basic lighting and the normal operation of the evacuation routes. However, the power provided will not suffice for the operation of the large-scale underwater transportation platform. The power generated by the backup generator is far from enough to operate it!” Fujino Masayoshi

uttered those words frantically. “The amount of power needed to drain the transportation systems is extremely big! Without the energy source, we cannot open it!”

“Damn it!” Chen Xiaolian threw a fist onto the wall beside in frustration.

He forced himself to take deep breaths and began to look around.

Calm down!

Chen Xiaolian! Clam down!

What you need to do right now is to cool down!

Chen Xiaolian struggled to force his mind to calm down.

Then, he became alert again.

“Nagase Komi!”

“Guild Leader?”

Chen Xiaolian clutched onto the bald girl’s shoulder. “At present, our chance for survival would depend on everyone’s efforts! I am going to give you a task!”

“...yes!” The bald girl answered with a trembling voice.

“You will bring Fujino Masayoshi to go find the diving equipment that he mentioned earlier. After you find it, get him to help you operate it!” Chen Xiaolian said in a heavy tone of voice. “Especially that submersible vehicle outfitted with propellers! You must find that! Then, use the transport truck to bring it over here!”

“...yes! I... I...” The bald headed girl was showing signs of panicking.

“Do not panic! You can do it!” At the present moment, Chen Xiaolian could only choose to trust and encourage Nagase Komi. “Do not forget, you are an Awakened! You are no longer an ordinary human. If you wish to live, then you need to work hard at it. Understand? What you need to do now is to save yourself! Trust me! As long as you do as I instruct you to, I will be able to get you out of here alive!”

“... yes!” Nagase Komi’s voice remained shaky. However, her expression has clearly become more steady.

“Hurry up and go! There is not enough time left. If Fujino Masayoshi refuses to cooperate, then there is no need to go easy on him!” Chen Xiaolian handed a gun to Nagase Komi.

He watched as Nagase Komi dragged Fujino Masayoshi to the side.

Chen Xiaolian turned around, ran back toward the weapon armoury and began re-inspecting the explosives stored inside the armoury.

“Detonators... plastic explosives... son of a bitch! It is not enough!”

Chen Xiaolian frantically gathered up whatever he could find inside the armoury.

His objective was clear: first, he must blow up the ceiling of this underground warehouse!

Unfortunately, the ceiling of this warehouse would certainly be extremely durable!

Only by blasting a hole through the ceiling would they be able to enter the sealed transportation platform.

Then, they will be able to enter the sealed module, which will lead them into the underwater channel. That way, they will be able to leave this place!

Chen Xiaolian found a huge platform lift within the warehouse.

From the location of the platform lift, it appeared that once the platform lift was activated, it would allow the platform that has a length of ten meters and width of ten meters to go directly up to the ceiling.

Under normal circumstances, the control panels could open the ceiling of that area. After draining the seawaters from the sealed module on top, the platform lift would be used to bring down the materials transported into the sealed module on top.

After finding the location of the platform lift, Chen Xiaolian raised his head to inspect the ceiling.

Clearly, the steel doors to this ceiling were designed to separate out from both sides – it was somewhat similar to the platform that they saw from the time they seized the tank from the Metropolitan Police Headquarters.

“Chen Xiaolian, do not panic! You will survive out of this! You will definitely make it!”

Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth. He brought a lift truck over and climbed his way up its mast. Then, he attached one bombs after another onto the ceiling.

Damn it... a pity that Roddy has fainted!

Otherwise, Roddy would be able to use his skill to unlock the ceiling! There would be no need for him to use bombs.

Chen Xiaolian was not a professional in the field of explosion. He knew not how to calculate the amount of bombs needed.

Not that it mattered. Chen Xiaolian simply attached all the explosives he could find onto the ceiling.

This was a very hastily put up plan and Chen Xiaolian had no guarantees that this plan could succeed.

First, Chen Xiaolian was simply uncertain as to how thick the ceiling of this warehouse was!

Would the blast from the explosives be enough to create an opening big enough for them...

If the blast failed to create an opening, or if the opening was not big enough for them to go through...

Various outcomes were possible. At the current moment however, Chen Xiaolian simply has no other option.

The only thing he could choose to do was...

Test his luck!

...

Unfortunately, Chen Xiaolian's luck did not appear to be as strong as he had hoped.

Chen Xiaolian climbed down from the mast. At the same instant that he placed his foot on the ground, he heard a loud banging sound!

A loud boom echoed!

The entire warehouse appeared to be shaken as a result of the noise.

Subsequently, the door of the warehouse... the thick, metal vault door... collapsed down!

It was broken apart!

An impressively robust figure appeared behind the door.

"I am coming! My preys, are you ready?"

Tian Lie swaggered into the warehouse and extended a hand to rub his baldhead.

His eyes quickly found Chen Xiaolian and Tian Lie curled the corners of his lips in a grin. "Oh, the first prey has appeared!"

Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate to act!

The moment he caught sight of Tian Lie, he quickly picked up the 20 mm gatling-style rotary cannon from the ground and held it with his hands.

Bang bang bang bang...

An intense sound of bullets firing rang out loudly!

Within the dimly lit warehouse, the insane barrage of 20 mm bullets created a thick line of fire in the middle of the air.

Tian Lie stood in the doorway. Seeing the incoming barrage of bullets, Tian Lie showed no inclination to even dodge. Tian Lie sneered, raised both arms to cover his face and stepped forward with big strides.

Bang bang bang bang bang...

Bullets poured out at an insane speed and blazing flames sprayed out

from the muzzle of the rotary cannon.

The fired out bullets were all concentrated onto Tian Lie's body!

Tian Lie's huge, robust body simply provided for the best target for the bullets! At that moment however, Tian Lie's body suddenly glowed with a faint silvery light. It was as though his entire body had transformed into something exuding a faint silvery metal colour.

The 20 mm bullets from the gatling-style rotary cannon struck his body only to bounce off and fall as scrap metal! Fiery sparks burst out from Tian Lie's body as a result.

Under this baptism of fire brought upon by the intense gunfire, Tian Lie marched forward!

The 20 mm rotary cannon was actually incapable of harming Tian Lie in the slightest. The strong firepower of this weapon was not even capable of causing him to stagger or slow him down!

Tian Lie appeared completely unaffected by the huge momentum behind the bullets.

He stepped forward yet again!

One step... three steps... ten steps... twenty steps!

The distance between Tian Lie and Chen Xiaolian was now only roughly ten meters!

Wu wu...

Chen Xiaolian has finished firing out every last bullet for the gatling-style rotary cannon.

A tint of redness appeared on the muzzle of the rotary cannon, signifying how hot it has become even as it issued out rotating sounds of "wu wu".

"No more ammunition?"

Tian Lie put down his hands and he looked on with a cold expression. "Pitiful ants. With a weapon of this level, how could you hope to hurt

me?”

“I was not really hoping that this weapon could stop you,” Chen Xiaolian’s face remained calm and he coolly regarded Tian Lie.

“Oh?”

“I just wanted to use it... in order to lure you over to stand before me. I am afraid that if you are standing too far away, I will miss!” The instant he said that, Chen Xiaolian immediately pulled out the weapon he placed on his back.

A flat muzzle pointed forward! It was none other than the beam weapon that was created through the technology found from researching the Mech!

The weapon was already fully charged. Chen Xiaolian pulled the beam weapon and aimed it directly at Tian Lie.

Without any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian pulled the trigger.

Weng!

A faintly translucent and orange coloured beam fired out instantly! With only a distance of ten meters between them, Tian Lie had no opportunity to dodge out of the way and the beam of light struck him squarely in the chest area!

A booming sound rang out and nearly half of Tian Lie’s upper body area burst apart as the beam of light struck him!

Tian Lie’s body, glowing faintly with a silvery metal colour was unharmed despite receiving the full barrage of bullets from a 20 mm gatling-style rotary cannon. However, under the attack of the beam of light, his body burst apart!

Tian Lie’s huge body soared through the air from the impact and he flew over ten meters backward. Finally, his body smashed upon the left side of the entrance door.

After the beam of light dissipated, the left part of Tian Lie’s chest and his entire left shoulder has completely disappeared!

The only thing left on the upper left side of Tian Lie's body was his tilting neck and his head, which appeared to be on the verge of falling.

In just one shot, Tian Lie was maimed!

...

Despite such a tremendous victory, Chen Xiaolian showed no expression of joy at all. Instead, he quickly picked up the rotary cannon again and replaced the ammunition belt.

With one hand holding onto the rotary cannon and another holding onto the beam weapon, Chen Xiaolian strode toward Tian Lie!

Tian Lie's body was embedded into the wall. However, he was not dead...

Naturally, he was not dead!

Upon Tian Lie's maimed left upper body area, not a single drop of blood flowed out. Instead, silvery liquid could be seen moving upon the area.

The maimed part on Tian Lie's body began to fuse together and gradually became more complete!

Tian Lie suddenly opened his eyes. Next, he used his intact right arm to readjust his head into position and break himself free from the wall.

"Interesting! It seems you found a rather good weapon."

After saying that, he fell down from the wall, along with some broken rubble.

After falling onto the ground, Tian Lie's body appeared unsteady and he was somewhat staggering.

Chen Xiaolian kept stepping forward unhesitatingly and he pulled the trigger to the gatling-style rotary cannon, firing out once more with it!

An intense amount of bullets sprayed onto Tian Lie's body, causing his body to stagger again and again.

Some of the bullets struck the maimed upper left area of Tian Lie's body, hitting the silvery liquid that was moving along the fused body area.

Tian Lie's body continued healing itself rapidly. However, even though

the barrage of bullets on his body could not bring any harm to him, it appeared to be effectively slowing down his rate of healing!

This was Chen Xiaolian's objective!

Chen Xiaolian had already taken twenty steps forward!

Twenty steps, twenty seconds!

The beam weapon had finished recharging!

This time, Chen Xiaolian aimed the beam weapon at Tian Lie's waist area.

The translucent, orange coloured beam of light fired out once more, sweeping through Tian Lie's waist area!

Under the damaging power of the beam of light, the area below Tian Lie's waist, his entire left leg was liquefied.

Tian Lie's head fell onto the ground, falling face first into a large pool of silvery liquid.

The attack launched this time was more accurate and more ruthless compared to the one fired earlier!

Chen Xiaolian did not hold back. Right after the beam of light dissipated, the rotary cannon roared out once again!

The dense number of bullets peppered Tian Lie, knocking him back continuously until his body reached the surface of the wall. His body became no different from a broken doll, rocking back and forth under the hail of bullets striking him.

Finally...

Wu wu wu...

The ammunition belt was emptied!

Chen Xiaolian was now standing before Tian Lie with less than two meters of distance between them.

At present, Tian Lie's body only have one intact right arm and half a body.

This time, after pulling the beam weapon out, Chen Xiaolian aimed it right onto Tian Lie's head.

"I hear you have an immortal body?" The expression on Chen Xiaolian's face was cold.

Weng!

The beam of light fired out and Tian Lie's head liquefied under the beam of light, turning into scattered drops of silver liquid!

The beam of light continued downward, cutting a path through the middle of Tian Lie's body. Tian Lie's body then turned into a pool of silver liquid.

...

Chapter 151: Final Hunt

The three blasts from the beam weapon were able to get rid of Tian Lie!

Tian Lie's body dissolved into a big pool of silvery liquid, which appeared to be seeping into the ground and wall.

There was no expression of joy on Chen Xiaolian's face. He quickly kept the beam weapon, which was now emitting black smoke – the beam weapon was now completely scrapped.

It was as Fujino Masayoshi had said, it was a mere imitation with incompatible materials. After using it, the high amount of energy will overload the weapon, burning its components.

Chen Xiaolian quickly ran back and saw a construction truck moving slowly toward his position.

Nagase Komi was seated in the driver seat of the construction truck. Under her control, the construction truck swerved about unsteadily. On its way to Chen Xiaolian's position, it knocked into a metal stand.

Thankfully, the speed of the construction truck was not too fast.

Fujino Masayoshi fell out from the back of the construction truck and a gash appeared on his forehead. Blood trickled down from the wound.

“Guild Leader! Look what I found!”

There was a boastful expression on Nagase Komi's face.

Inspecting the contents, Chen Xiaolian saw that Nagase Komi's harvest was indeed considerable.

Behind the construction truck was a small-scale submersible vehicle – to be more accurate, it could be considered as a small-scale submarine.

An electric propeller was installed upon the exterior surface of the submersible vehicle.

Additionally, there were also four sets of diving equipment and four small-scale oxygen tanks.

The diving equipment there were all picked by Fujino Masayoshi. After inspecting, he had picked the ones that were intact and the oxygen tanks were all full.

Chen Xiaolian regarded the submersible vehicle.

The submersible vehicle was a miniature submarine the size of a small car. Furthermore, the available space inside was limited and it was barely able to fit in all four of them.

Chen Xiaolian put on the diving suit for Roddy. After that, the three of them, Chen Xiaolian, Nagase Komi and Fujino Masayoshi all put on their respective diving suits.

“We still have eighteen minutes!”

Chen Xiaolian checked the remaining time. After all of them have entered the miniature submarine, Chen Xiaolian stood outside the door, looking up at the ceiling. He produced the remote control for the explosives, took a deep breath and pressed the button!

Boom!

A loud explosion echoed out as a result! Following the sound, a series of explosions resounded from above their heads.

The ceiling area above the platform lift exploded and flames burst out, causing the entire warehouse to shake a few times.

Next, a series of metal twisting and breaking sounds rang out. Huge portions of the warehouse ceiling collapsed down onto the ground.

Chen Xiaolian's group had moved the submersible vehicle to the corner of the warehouse, thus avoiding the collapsing ceiling fragments. However, the subsequent earthquake like tremors led to no small amount of instruments and metal stands falling down. As such, the danger of being struck still existed.

A loud explosion echoed throughout the warehouse. Following the loud explosion, a ceiling fragment with a diameter of about five meters collapsed down!

After the fragment fell, a huge amount of water surged inside! It was as though a huge waterfall had been opened up inside the warehouse.

“It is starting!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted and ran into the miniature submarine before locking the hatch and airlock.

Vast quantities of seawater poured into the warehouse and it was not long before the water level within the warehouse began to rise.

The rate at which the water poured in was extremely fast. Chen Xiaolian sat inside the submersible vehicle as he anxiously watched over the rising water level. Then, he checked the time left before the base self-destructs...

“Sixteen more minutes to go!”

“But... but, there may not be enough time for the water to fill the warehouse,” A bitter expression was plastered on Fujino Masayoshi’s face.

“What?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“I said, we do not have enough time!” Fujino Masayoshi’s face turned pale. “I have made the calculations for it! Considering the current size of the hole on the ceiling, the speed at which the water is entering and the volume of this warehouse... with this current rate of speed, in order to fill up this warehouse so that we could dive out, we will need at least twenty more minutes!”

Chen Xiaolian’s expression sank.

However, they only have sixteen minutes of time left in the countdown!

Once the base self-destructs...

“Damn it!”

Chen Xiaolian looked around anxiously. Then, his eyes suddenly lit up.

There was another beam weapon by Roddy’s side!

This beam weapon was the one they had seized from Fujino Masayoshi.

Fujino Masayoshi had already fired once with it. Then, Chen Xiaolian had also used it against the giant toad, firing one more time with it.

That meant this beam weapon could still be fired once more!

Chen Xiaolian quickly picked up the beam weapon from Roddy's side. He then moved to open the hatch and climb out.

The water level was still rising and the miniature submarine has started to float up.

Chen Xiaolian climbed onto the submersible vehicle and activated the beam weapon. Chen Xiaolian patiently waited for the weapon to charge up while he gazed at the area on the ceiling where water was flooding inside...

"There is only one opportunity here... son of a bitch! I need to shoot accurately! I need to make the hole bigger!"

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath...

Next, a translucent beam of light fired out from the beam weapon, striking squarely at the edge of the hole! Chen Xiaolian then shouted out as he lightly twisted his wrist.

The beam of light became a sharp blade, carving out a nearly three square meter semi-circular hole at the edge of the original one.

Most importantly, this blast from the beam weapon appeared to have struck a key structure...

Another loud boom reverberated out and another fragment of the ceiling collapsed down! This time, the fragment that collapsed downward was double the size of the earlier fragment! The waters flooding into the warehouse increased significantly!

Chen Xiaolian was greatly overjoyed and he hung the beam weapon on his back before turning around to climb back into the submersible vehicle. Then, he closed the hatch.

"It is done! Whether or not we make it will now depend on Heaven's will!" Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth.

The rate at which the water level was rising has clearly increased significantly!

In less than five minutes, the water level appeared to have risen by almost fifteen meters.

Fujino Masayoshi was the only one among them who knew how to operate the submersible vehicle. He quickly activated the diving mode for the submersible vehicle, causing the sealed capsule beneath the submersible vehicle to fill with water. The submersible vehicle began to sink down.

Soon, the submersible vehicle had submerged underwater!

As Chen Xiaolian was anxiously looking at the flood hole on the ceiling of the warehouse through the transparent part of the submersible vehicle, he suddenly heard Nagase Komi's scream. "What is that?"

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to look in the direction that Nagase Komi was looking. What he saw made him surprised.

Chen Xiaolian saw something twenty meters underwater to the left, in the direction of the entrance to this warehouse. It was a silvery mass moving about disorderly. It was not long before a human body shape appeared from the silvery mass.

Its two hands appeared to have transformed into tentacles, splitting out another eight tentacles from each hand. Those tentacles moved about madly underwater!

Whenever the tentacles made contact with the nearby metal stands, they would capture the metal stands and quickly pull the stands back to its silvery body. Then, the silvery mass will converge onto the metal stand, dissolving it within its body!

The head part of the silvery mass wiggled for a moment and facial contours appeared on the head. Eyes appeared on the eye part of the face. Upon the pair of eyes, a faint light was flashing out.

"It is Tian Lie!" Chen Xiaolian spat out fiercely. "He really does have an immortal body!"

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to look at Fujino Masayoshi. "Hurry up and leave! Get ready to move up!"

After the water level had reached the ceiling of the warehouse, the rate at which the water gushed down slowed.

At that moment, the warehouse was like a filled water bottle!

"Move, move, move! Hurry up and move!" Chen Xiaolian hastily urged Fujino Masayoshi onward as Fujino Masayoshi went about controlling the submersible vehicle to move up.

The electric propellers were turned on and the submersible vehicle moved like a stealthy underwater torpedo. Then the submersible vehicle slowly moved up to the ceiling.

At that moment, Chen Xiaolian saw that Tian Lie's body had already recovered by about 70% to 80%.

The silvery body appeared to be moving sluggishly due to it being underwater. However, Chen Xiaolian could clearly feel that Tian Lie's gaze was aimed at him!

Although the water was becoming more turbid, the feeling of being stared at only became clearer for Chen Xiaolian!

Tian Lie slowly stepped forward, moving underwater as he moved in the direction of the submersible vehicle.

"Hurry up!"

Chen Xiaolian shouted out loudly and Fujino Masayoshi turned the speed of the propeller to the maximum!

The submersible vehicle sped up immediately and it rushed upward at a ninety-degree angle.

Tian Lie followed right behind them. His movement speed was originally sluggish and slow. However, his movements gradually became keener and his speed also increased as a result.

The hole in the ceiling was about six meters wide and the submersible vehicle quickly shuttled out from the warehouse and into the upper layer.

The upper layer was a huge transportation platform module. At the top area, there was a channel with a diameter of around six meters.

Fujino Masayoshi need not be given any orders from Chen Xiaolian and he steered the submersible vehicle straight forward! Soon, they entered the channel. Fujino Masayoshi turned on the submersible vehicle's lights and the submersible vehicle kept moving forward.

"Are we no longer in danger?" Cold sweat trickled down from Nagase Komi's forehead and tears could be seen within her eyes.

"Not yet," Chen Xiaolian looked at the time nervously. "There are six more minutes to go. But this channel is 4 km long... Bloody Hell! I fear we do not have enough time to escape from here!"

"Even if the self-destruct mechanism begins to detonate the base, it should take some time before it reaches this channel, right? As of now, we can only pray to God," Fujino Masayoshi displayed a distressed expression.

"You still believe in God?" Chen Xiaolian sneered.

"Are you really going to be picky at a time like this?" Fujino Masayoshi cried out as he checked the controls, ensuring that the propellers were spinning at maximum speed. Then, Fujino Masayoshi nervously steered the submersible vehicle forward.

"Behind us! Something is catching up to us!"

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the back.

The underwater channel was originally dark and the only source of illumination came from the lights installed onto the submersible vehicle. With the illumination from the submersible vehicle's lights, Chen Xiaolian could vaguely make out a figure making its way forward through the channel behind them. The figure's speed was neither too fast nor too slow. At the very least, it was enough so that the submersible vehicle could not shake off the figure.

"It is Tian Lie!" Chen Xiaolian cursed out. "That son of a bitch just keeps coming back!"

“There is no way to increase the speed. This is already the fastest speed possible,” Fujino Masayoshi cried out.

“This will not do!” Chen Xiaolian exhaled, his face contorted. “Once he catches up to us, we will certainly die! With his abilities, getting rid of this submersible vehicle is just a piece of cake! We need to figure a way to hold him back!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly checked the weapons that he brought along.

Beam weapon... it is a very good weapon. Unfortunately, it could no longer be used.

Suddenly, Chen Xiaolian caught sight of a tactical vest lying within a corner of the submersible vehicle – hanging upon the tactical vest was a considerable number of hand grenades.

“I will go slow him down!” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth.

This was a very dangerous job. However, as of this moment, Chen Xiaolian had no other options. He cannot assign this job to others as well and could only step out on his own.

Chen Xiaolian quickly inspected his diving suit. Then, he equipped the oxygen tank and grabbed the tactical vest with the hand grenades.

“Drain the capsule, then I will go out! You need to open the door for me to move out of this submersible vehicle. Make sure you maintain the current speed! Understand? No matter what happens, do not slow down!”

Chen Xiaolian gave out his orders and Fujino Masayoshi quickly nodded – this fellow would clearly prefer to move this submersible vehicle out of here as fast as possible.

“You keep an eye on him,” Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Nagase Komi. Nagase Komi, who was trembling, nodded her head.

Chen Xiaolian quickly opened the door into the sealed capsule and moved outside the room. After the submersible vehicle’s hatch was opened, Chen Xiaolian quickly climbed out.

The submersible vehicle moved forward, causing a surge of rushing

water to flow by. Chen Xiaolian grabbed onto the handle on the external surface of the submersible vehicle before using a rope to tie his body to the handle.

Chen Xiaolian became like a fish, tied to the submersible vehicle as it kept moving forward.

Wearing underwater goggles, Chen Xiaolian could barely make out Tian Lie's incoming figure. It appeared that Tian Lie's speed has increased somewhat.

Chen Xiaolian bit onto the oxygen tube and snorted. He did his best to stick to the surface of the submersible vehicle as he produced the tactical vest. Retrieving one of the hand grenades, he pulled out the ring from the grenade and threw it to the back.

The rate at which the hand grenade was thrown under the water was not too fast. Thankfully, the submersible vehicle was constantly moving forward.

BOOM!

An underwater explosion erupted outward ten meters from behind the submersible vehicle.

The resulting water surge and shockwave produced by the explosion caused the area behind the submersible vehicle to become a blurry scene of chaos.

To Chen Xiaolian's disappointment, he quickly caught sight of Tian Lie. Tian Lie's figure charged out from among the turbulence of turbid waters and he continued chasing after the submersible vehicle.

Again!

Chen Xiaolian retrieved another hand grenade and tossed it out as well.

BOOM!

This time, the resulting explosion was very good. Chen Xiaolian's luck was in his favour as the radius of explosion enveloped Tian Lie's figure!

Tian Lie's figure tilted from the explosion and he nearly fell to the

surface of the channel walls.

This setback cost Tian Lie at least ten seconds!

Chen Xiaolian continued sticking close to the submersible vehicle as he tossed out one grenade after another to the back.

Bursts of underwater explosions rocked the area behind the submersible vehicle continuously, causing Tian Lie's speed to decrease significantly.

Chen Xiaolian watched as Tian Lie's figure grew more distant from the submersible vehicle. Soon, not even Tian Lie's figure could be seen.

Chen Xiaolian tossed out the final hand grenade and turned around to head into the sealed capsule of the submersible vehicle. After closing the hatch, Chen Xiaolian knocked the door to the interior of the submersible.

Fujino Masayoshi quickly drained all the water inside the sealed capsule before opening the doors to the interior, allowing Chen Xiaolian to climb inside.

After entering, Chen Xiaolian rolled on the floor and gasped for a moment. "Son of a bitch! A pity there is nothing better available. If there are any explosives, I could just blow up the channel behind us and make it collapse. That way, the fellow would be trapped."

"Guild Leader? He is not chasing after us..." Nagase Komi screamed out in delight.

"Do not be too happy just yet. There is quite some distance between us. However, he must still be right behind us," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "He will never let us go while hand grenades simply would not do much to him. Hand grenades could only delay him and pull the distance between us."

Chen Xiaolian was not too concerned with having Tian Lie following them. All they need to do was maintain some distance from Tian Lie. According to the system, as long as they exit the channel... they would have met the requirement set by the system: Leave the research institute!

By doing so, they would have completed the system's quest and could

leave immediately! At that time, they simply need not care about Tian Lie!

Chen Xiaolian was currently concerned something else. The people from the other group!

Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo and the others!

Even until now, he had yet to receive any system prompt.

Generally speaking, if Qiao Qiao and the others were able to complete the other quest, the system should have issued out a prompt.

However, there was still no prompt... could it be? Could their quest remain unfinished even now?

The Biochemical Faction's quest... is it that difficult?

With Nicole, the Floating Angel with them, they were still incapable of completing the quest?

...

The countdown had ended!

In the final moment when the countdown ended, Nagase Komi let out a sharp scream. However, nothing happened. Nagase Komi looked at Chen Xiaolian and Fujino Masayoshi with a puzzled expression.

Chen Xiaolian's face was grim as he said. "Even though the self-destruct has begun, it will take some time before it reaches this place. Be prepared for it!"

As expected... in merely ten seconds of time...

The entire underwater channel shook fiercely!

The flow of water suddenly became turbulent!

"It is here!" Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. "Hold on tight! Fujino Masayoshi, keep moving forward at full speed!"

"I know!" Fujino Masayoshi's expression twisted and he let loose a loud roar himself! His pair of eyes had turned red.

The submersible vehicle moved forward amid the trembling underwater

channel and “weng weng” sounds hummed out from the submersible’s propeller!

The faint collapsing sounds of certain parts of the underwater channel could be heard. Following that, debris fell down onto the surface of the submersible vehicle.

Nagase Komi knelt on the floor; both her hands were clutching her head as tears flowed out from her eyes. Chen Xiaolian grasped tightly onto a handle while his other hand held onto Roddy to stop Roddy’s body from rolling around.

“The exit is just up front!” Fujino Masayoshi suddenly shouted out in delight.

The underwater lights installed onto the submersible vehicle illuminated the chaotic turbulence before them, revealing a dome shaped exit...

However, there was a metal fence fixed upon the exit...

“Smash through it!” Chen Xiaolian roared loudly. “Smash it! This moment will determine whether we live or die!”

“A a a a ah!” Fujino Masayoshi twisted his face and he howled out frantically.

...

BOOM!

On the seabed’s continental shelf, a splintered metal fence was smashed out of a metal pipe and a yellow submersible vehicle charged out from the pipe!

It charged out together with a gushing flow of water before veering into the sea.

The front part of the submersible vehicle was deformed and some parts had caved inward. Even the metal parts were deformed.

“Move up!” Chen Xiaolian saw that cracks were appearing on the surface of the reinforced glass of the sealed capsule. He quickly shouted.

“This vehicle would not be able to last much longer! Hurry up and move to the surface!”

...

When the submersible vehicle broke through the surface of the water, Nagase Komi broke out in tears of joy as she sobbed.

Tears and snot were all over the bald girl's face. The same could be said about Fujino Masayoshi who knelt down as his hand kept grasping tightly onto the control panel, tears flowing down his cheeks.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he displayed a complicated look.

Through the cracked glass, he could view the blue sky and seas.

One whole night had passed since the moment they entered the underground research institute.

It was currently early in the morning outside.

The sun could be seen slowly rising upon the horizontal surface of the sea.

Waves washed over the surface of the submersible vehicle.

Chen Xiaolian could not hold it in and he exhaled deeply before issuing a laugh.

Soon however, a puzzled expression came over him.

“Why... why hasn't the system issued out a notification?”

That is not right! That is not right!

Logically speaking, once they left the research institute, they should have completed the quest! They should be able to leave the instance dungeon!

At present though, there was no notification from the system!

No notification!

They were also not teleported out of this instance dungeon.

What is going on here?

As Chen Xiaolian was feeling puzzled...

The notification from the system arrived!

Seeing the notification, Chen Xiaolian was quick to feel delighted. However, after he read the notification from the system... his face sank!

[System prompt: Your guild has successfully met the requirements needed to complete this instance dungeon and has cleared the condition needed to be teleported out from this instance dungeon.].

[System prompt: Someone has utilized a [B] Class Hunt Prolonging Card on your guild. Teleportation out has been delayed by 10 hours. Teleportation will begin once the effect of the [B] Class Hunt Prolonging Card runs out.].

Hunt Prolonging Card?

What the Hell is that thing?

Chen Xiaolian was both shocked and furious.

Chen Xiaolian quickly tapped open the [B] Class Hunt Prolonging Card part of the system notification. As expected, there was a description available.

[B] Class Hunt Prolonging Card: This item can be utilized against any individual or team within line of sight. After utilization, it will ignore all conditions set by the instance dungeon and designate the target as the prey who will be forced to remain within the instance dungeon. The time limit is 10 hours. Conditions for lifting the effects of this card: Wait for the 10 hours of hunting time to end or kill off all the designated prey.

“...” Chen Xiaolian gnashed his teeth. “TIAN! LIE!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly understood why Tian Lie did not seem to be in a hurry to chase after them. Instead, Tian Lie had simply trailed them!

Chen Xiaolian abruptly ran to Fujino Masayoshi's side and pulled him up with one hand. “Stop crying! We need to hurry up and leave! Hurry!”

Fujino Masayoshi was flabbergasted at being caught up by Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian shouted. “Hurry! Do not ask anything! Just hurry

up and leave this place!”

“We... where should we go?”

“Damn it! Of course we will go to the land!” Chen Xiaolian’s forehead turned red with rage.

Of course, we have to get to land! We cannot stay in the sea!

At present, their side only has this miniature submarine! If they were to move out to the seas and the power runs out, they will be stuck in that one location. Once Tian Lie finds them, they will have nowhere to run to!

The only way for them to survive was to get to land. Then, they will think of a way to deal with Tian Lie.

“Yes, yes...” Fujino Masayoshi did not know why Chen Xiaolian was so agitated. However, he dared not disobey Chen Xiaolian’s orders.

Fujino Masayoshi quickly retrieved a GPS positioning device.

“We are currently at Tokyo Bay... the distance between our current position and land is... 40 nautical miles,” Fujino Masayoshi said. “Our maximum speed is 15 knots. In other words, to return to land will take us around two and a half hours or three hours.”

“Do not be long-winded! Hurry! Hurry!”

Fujino Masayoshi quickly started up the propeller and the submersible vehicle began to sail across the surface of the water, moving toward land.

Around ten minutes after the submersible vehicle left the area...

A bald head emerged from under the sea, breaking through the surface of the waters there.

Tian Lie’s body emerged from the surface of the sea. He stood naked upon the water surface and the magnificent muscles upon his body brimmed with a striking sense of savagery.

Tian Lie felt the drops of water slowly trickling down his cheeks as he revealed a ferocious grin. “Ten more hours to go... enough for an interesting hunt to unfold! Run! Hurry up and run! It would be best if you

can go find that Floating Angel!”

Chapter 152: Hide And Seek

Chen Xiaolian was in low spirits.

It would be more accurate to say that he was feeling vexed.

Back when Chen Xiaolian was inside the underground research institute, faced with a dangerous predicament, he could still force himself to calm down and find a way to survive through the desperate situation.

At present however, he had finally grasped onto the light of dawn brought about by victory, only to be pulled back down into the abyss... this feeling was not easy to swallow.

However, what vexed Chen Xiaolian the most was that he had fully taken into account all the surrounding circumstances and utilized whatever he could get his hands on in order to pave out a path to victory.

In the end however, an unexpected situation arose!

Hunt Prolonging Card?

He really, really hated such a kind of unexpected situation!

Chen Xiaolian was essentially someone who was confident and unyielding. For someone like him, this random and unexpected situation was something he detested the most!

The submersible vehicle moved forward at full speed.

Seeing that the submersible vehicle was already at maximum speed, Chen Xiaolian sat down and took a few deep breaths. He forced himself to calm down and pinched his ears – this was a minor habit of his. Whenever he was in an irritable mood and was unable to focus, he would pinch his ears.

All right! Calm down! Chen Xiaolian, calm down!

Now, let's begin by analysing the current situation.

Presently, the biggest hurdle was the ten hours of hunting time. Additionally, the hunter in question, Tian Lie possessed a strength that far surpasses his... back then, he had utilized all the advantageous factors

he had and all his strength, only to be able to delay Tian Lie for a while. All evidence pointed toward the fact that he did not possess the necessary strength to fight against Tian Lie's immortal body.

Hmmm... maybe... Bai Qi?

Chen Xiaolian let out a sigh. The cool down period for summoning Bai Qi has yet to end. Yesterday afternoon, he had already summoned out Bai Qi to do battle on the highway. After each summoning, a cool down period of 24 hours was necessary.

The time left before he could summon Bai Qi again was...

Chen Xiaolian checked the time: Another 9 and a half hour to go!

All right, then! Let's make it through this cool down period first! At least there is one good possibility here. Once the cool down period for summoning Bai Qi is over, then... perhaps I can summon Bai Qi out to deal with the bald headed fellow!

Chen Xiaolian's mind quickly made the calculations.

There was another condition that he could utilize. In this instance dungeon, a restriction was placed onto everyone's radar. As such, Tian Lie would be unable to accurately pin down his location.

Which meant to say, this is a hunt. As long as I run away fast enough and hide myself properly, there exists the possibility for me to safely make it through the rest of the hunting time.

Since that is the case, choosing to return to land would be a wise move. Only when we are on land would we be able to find more place to hide. If we remain on the sea... we lack the ability to move about.

"Hide and seek?" Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile.

Furthermore, there was another question troubling Chen Xiaolian's mind: What is the situation regarding the other group?

Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo, Xia Xiaolei, Lun Tai, Bei Tai, Nicole... are they all right?

Glancing at the unconscious Roddy, Chen Xiaolian let out a resentful

smile. “Son of a bitch! You sure can sleep. Right now, I have to do all the heavy thinking alone ah.”

...

The submersible vehicle has been moving for roughly 2 hours. By this time, they could already catch a glimpse of land upon the horizon.

However, Fujino Masayoshi came to report a bad news.

“The propeller is running out of power,” Fujino Masayoshi said with a frustrated expression. “The propeller runs on battery. Considering how long we have been moving, the battery power is almost exhausted. In five minutes time, we will begin to slow down... I cannot be certain if the remaining battery power will be sufficient to bring us over until the coast.”

“Are there any ways to solve it?”

Fujino Masayoshi considered the matter for a moment. “We can try to reduce the weight. By reducing the weight that the submersible vehicle has to carry, perhaps we can reduce the amount of power consumed.”

Chen Xiaolian quickly led Nagase Komi together with him as they tossed away anything that could be done without within the submersible vehicle. Several oxygen tanks were the first to be thrown off – two oxygen tanks were left as backup.

Even so, the submersible vehicle was only able to keep going for another 20 minutes.

The submersible vehicle’s power ran out and the propeller’s rotation speed gradually became slower until it came to a halt.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and glanced at the rising sun.

The next phase of the journey would depend on Chen Xiaolian himself.

According to Fujino Masayoshi’s calculation, the distance between their current location and the coastline should be less than two nautical miles. That distance was the equivalent to around three km.

Within the submersible vehicle was a life raft. It was a self-inflating life

raft.

The self-inflating life raft automatically inflated itself after it was thrown onto the surface of the sea. Then, the four of them abandoned the completely immobile submersible vehicle and got on the life raft. Picking up the oars, they rowed toward the coastline.

Thankfully, the day's weather was good and no storm was in sight.

Chen Xiaolian was the main rower when rowing the life raft forward.

Fujino Masayoshi was simply a civilian researcher with a weak body. As for Nagase Komi, she had not enhanced her body much and has as much physical attributes as an ordinary under aged female.

Rowing the life raft in the sea was not an easy thing to do. For beginners, it was very easy to lose control of the direction.

Chen Xiaolian, Fujino Masayoshi and Nagase Komi exerted all their might to row the life raft. Even so, the two nautical miles took them nearly one hour to cross. When they were close to the coastline, Chen Xiaolian simply jumped down into the sea. He used his own enhanced body strength to pull the life raft forward.

When they finally stepped foot onto land, Fujino Masayoshi's body slumped onto the sandy beach and he broke out in tears.

Observing Fujino Masayoshi, Chen Xiaolian's heart felt heavy and he let out a sigh. "It is time to separate."

"You... you people are going to leave now?"

Naturally, Fujino Masayoshi had long since deduced that these people were not from the Special Assault Team.

"Yes, we will go our separate ways," Chen Xiaolian thought about it and smiled. "You are now free. Not only that, you will be safe. Do not worry about it. That fellow is only chasing after us, not you. So, us separating ways would ensure your safety."

"..." Fujino Masayoshi's face revealed a complicated expression.

Chen Xiaolian patted Fujino Masayoshi on the shoulder and smiled.

“We will not be meeting again in the future... besides, even if we do meet up again, you will not recognize us.”

Chen Xiaolian picked up Roddy and led Nagase Komi as he moved ahead, going deeper into the land area.

They were in a desolate beach. There was a ring of tide embankment.

Circling around from the outside, they found a coastal highway.

Chen Xiaolian and his group walked along the road for a moment and found a seafood processing plant located by the seaside. Chen Xiaolian found a pickup truck inside the processing plant's warehouse. After successfully starting up the pickup truck, his spirits was lifted!

“Tian Lie! If you have the ability, then try to catch up!”

Chen Xiaolian tossed Roddy onto the back seat while he sat on the driver's seat. Nagase Komi sat beside him. Stepping on the throttle, Chen Xiaolian drove the pickup truck toward the road and sped off.

Chen Xiaolian found a map inside the pickup truck and found that the road they were taking would lead them toward Tokyo City. Seeing no other option, he simply drove the pickup truck toward Tokyo.

At the very least, Tokyo was a huge place with a complicated terrain and a chaotic circumstance!

It was a very suitable place for hide and seek!

Arriving at Tokyo, Chen Xiaolian saw that it was already 11 o'clock in the morning.

Nearly 5 hours of the hunting time has passed.

It was already half over!

Hope burned anew within Chen Xiaolian's heart!

...

Bang!

The impact of the punch created a concave upon the surface of the yellow submersible vehicle.

Tian Lie stood upon the sea and regarded the submersible vehicle with a cold demeanour.

“Hmph, I am getting closer now, my little prey!”

...

“Guild Leader?” Nagase Komi who was seated on the first passenger seat looked out through the window at the scene before them. She was unable to restrain herself and she whispered out. “It... it seems like...”

“En! I know!” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows and a complicated look appeared on his face, his eyebrows carrying a trace of uncertainty within them.

The pickup truck had already entered the Tokyo area.

However, Chen Xiaolian was puzzled to see that the streets before their vehicle were empty.

The street on both sides were very clean and quiet.

Furthermore, it was... too quiet!

Along the way, they saw no one at all!

The houses and buildings they saw on both sides of the street were all intact – that made things even weirder.

Chen Xiaolian clearly recalled that when his team was leaving Tokyo yesterday, all of Tokyo had fallen into a state of chaos.

Back then, the city area was filled with monsters, flames, explosions and collapsing buildings... abandoned cars littered the streets.

There was also the shrill sound of sirens ringing out from the various regions of Tokyo from time to time...

However, at this moment, after returning to Tokyo and entering the city, Chen Xiaolian found that this place... was extremely quiet!

The streets, the houses and buildings... they were all intact.

The streets were utterly clean and devoid of pedestrians.

As they were speeding through an intersection, Chen Xiaolian caught sight of a tall building from far away. The sight of this tall building made Chen Xiaolian extremely puzzled. He clearly recalled that this building and many others were already destroyed by the time he and his team left Tokyo yesterday.

But as of now, all of them were seemingly intact!

Indeed, the destroyed Tokyo appeared to have been restored to its original state!

Furthermore... all the people that should be here was nowhere in sight.

Not a single person!

The streets were empty; with the exception of the flashing traffic lights, the entire area was a sea of silence!

Chen Xiaolian's objective was simple, and that was to travel to the most bustling and central area of Tokyo, Ginza. However, now that he had arrived, he saw that the usually crowded street had become something reminiscent of a ghost town.

An indescribably uncomfortable feeling welled up from within Chen Xiaolian's heart.

"How much time is left?"

Chen Xiaolian asked Nagase Komi.

"There is... less than four hours," Nagase Komi replied in a trembling voice.

In the face of this ghost town like Tokyo City, Nagase Komi was also feeling frightful.

This scenario was something that would only appear in movies.

Chen Xiaolian suppressed the feelings of bewilderment within his heart and decided to get something to eat first.

After fighting throughout the night and exerting so much effort to row the life raft in the seas, even Chen Xiaolian with his enhanced physical

body felt somewhat exhausted. An expression of fatigue was on Nagase Komi's face as well. If not for the fact that she was too frightened, this girl might have long since fallen asleep.

The hunger within their stomach was discomforting and their bodies felt weak.

Chen Xiaolian quickly stopped the pickup truck by a street and walked into a supermarket located by the street. He went to check the items on the food shelves and showed no hesitation to sweep a handful of them with him as he walked back out.

Chen Xiaolian sat in the pickup truck as he munched onto bread, ham and other foods. Then, he gulped down a bottle of mineral water. It was only then did he feel slightly better.

Chen Xiaolian also summoned out Garfield and fed it with pet food before summoning him back into the system.

"I believe that we cannot keep going around at random," Chen Xiaolian furrowed his eyebrows. "I have this uneasy feeling. Since Tian Lie was willing to use the Hunt Prolonging Card, he must have some form of method to track us down. Otherwise, even though 10 hours is not a short period of time, to track us down within this large area is simply no different from trying to find a needle in a haystack. I believe that he should have a trump card that we do not know of."

"I... I will listen to your orders, Guild Leader," Nagase Komi replied gingerly.

"Just what is Tian Lie's trump card? What method does he have to track us down?"

After having eaten his fill, Chen Xiaolian felt more clear-headed. He then turned to glance at the empty streets. Suddenly, a thought came to his mind!

"I understand now!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly shouted out loudly. "I nearly made a mistake!"

Chen Xiaolian quickly moved out of the pickup truck. Standing by the street, he raised his head and glanced at the sky before glancing back down at the surrounding street area.

He made his deduction!

At present, the city of Tokyo appeared to have been restored to how it was before the start of the instance dungeon because...

Because the third phase of the instance dungeon had already begun! The area for the third phase of the instance dungeon was located in the underground research institute.

In other words, the instance dungeon involving the city of Tokyo was already over!

Do not forget, during the second phase of the quest, there was a system prompt requiring the participants to complete the second phase of the quest within 8 hours. Otherwise, they will be deemed to have failed the quest and be teleported out of this instance dungeon.

That meant that the instance dungeon for the storyline involving the city of Tokyo had ended.

Thus, since last night... the system had already refreshed the entirety of Tokyo City!

However, since the third phase of the quest remained incomplete...

Only the instance dungeon area of Tokyo was refreshed whereas the people of this area were not.

In other words, the citizens of Tokyo, inclusive of the people here, all of them were still undergoing the system's calculation for the refreshing process.

It was the same process as those involved when resetting a sandbox environment. First, the buildings and streets must be constructed properly. Only then could the various characters be added in.

The current situation here was akin to a properly constructed sandbox. The only thing missing was the people.

It was at this time that Tian Lie had utilized the Hunt Prolonging Card!

Clearly, this prop possessed a very powerful function. It was capable of ignoring the restrictions involved in the system's refreshing process and 'impede' the process for 10 hours!

That was to say... within these 10 hours of time, the system's refreshing process has been halted.

The resulting scenario was... the Tokyo setting has been restored; however, not a single living being was inside this area!

Chen Xiaolian recalled. On his way here, he saw no trace of humans. Not even cats and dogs could be seen! Not even birds could be seen!

For the sake of confirming his deduction, he quickly ran into a pet shop located by the street.

There, he confirmed his deduction: The cages within the pet shop were all empty!

Not a single living being was here!

Thus... there was the possibility that within the 10 hours of hunting time, the only prey within the entire area was them!

In fact, there was another possibility: The Hunt Prolonging Card may have an effect similar to that of a radar!

When Chen Xiaolian considered the matter through such a perspective, he was suddenly able to gain clarity.

If he were to assume that the Hunt Prolonging Card could impede the time for this entire area, then perhaps this entire area could be projected upon the surface of the Hunt Prolonging Card.

If so, the circumstances would become very obvious. If the entire area shown on a map or radar happened to be empty, devoid of any moving objects...

Then, if someone like him, the prey were to move... well, wouldn't he be easy to find?

Chen Xiaolian was 80 per cent confident that his deduction was very close to the truth!

...

Tian Lie turned around to leave.

On the ground behind him was Fujino Masayoshi. He was now lying limp on the ground from fear and he shivered non-stop.

Tian Lie simply ignored Fujino Masayoshi. He turned around before bolting forward on the highway.

The speed of his movement was incredibly fast, just like that of a car charging forward at full speed.

He rapidly nudged out something within his system interface.

[Hunt Prolonging Card prompt: xxx coordinate, moving object detected.].

Tian Lie smiled and he closed the interface.

“It appears that I am getting closer! The distance is... three km?” Tian Lie then produced a mobile phone that he picked up from who knew where. After checking the mobile phone’s GPS positioning, he gave a faint smile. “Soon! Soon!”

...

Chen Xiaolian did not know that his deductions had indeed gotten very close to the truth.

Indeed, the Hunt Prolonging Card possessed the functions that he had guessed. It could serve as a radar.

However, it could only do one thing; detect moving objects within the area.

Since the current time was ‘impeded’ time, by that logic, the only moving life form within this time would be the prey. Under the present circumstances, there should be no other moving life forms!

The Hunt Prolonging Card’s function was that within every 5 minutes, it

would announce the coordinates of the moving life form.

...

“We cannot move?” Chen Xiaolian’s heart sank.

However, their current coordinates was likely already within Tian Lie’s grasp. If they do not move and simply wait around, Tian Lie will still find them.

If they move... Tian Lie would likely chase up to them!

Chen Xiaolian quickly thought of a method. He glanced at Nagase Komi who was seated inside the pickup truck while staring blankly at him.

Separate from this girl?

That would mean creating two different moving coordinates.

Doing so, there would be a 50 per cent chance that Tian Lie would get diverted move to chase her. At the very least, it would allow me one to gain some time, right?

Soon, Chen Xiaolian made his decision.

Looking at the time, he saw that there was still three and a half hour left!

...

“Guild Leader, you mean we should... separate?” Nagase Komi was petrified from shock. Her first reaction was: I am being abandoned!

Chen Xiaolian replied in a solemn tone of voice. “There is not enough time to explain the details. By separating, we can cause some problems for Tian Lie. It might be able to buy us some time. Additionally... relax. Tian Lie’s target is me. It would be more accurate to say that there is no grudge between you and him. Even if he does find you, there is a high chance that you will not be killed.

“Furthermore, even if the two of us remain together, our fates after being found by him would remain the same. If so, it would be better for us to separate and test our luck.”

“...” Nagase Komi was so terrified that she was unable to say anything.

Chen Xiaolian did not have to time to explain more about it to Nagase Komi.

“I will leave this pickup truck to you. Start it up and run away. The further you run, the better it will be,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head and brought Roddy with him as he alighted from the truck. Nagase Komi called out continuously from behind, but he could only ignore her.

After calling out loudly several times, Nagase Komi saw that Chen Xiaolian was moving far away. She could not restrain herself and cursed out loudly.

Although what Chen Xiaolian said made sense, Nagase Komi believed that she had been abandoned.

...

Chen Xiaolian carried Roddy to the side of a street and found another car. Starting up the car, he quickly moved out.

“Three hours and eighteen minutes more to go,” Chen Xiaolian looked at the time.

It was then that something unexpected occurred.

[System Prompt: Your guild members have completed the third phase of the quest ‘Seize the research results of the Bio-transformation Faction’. System reward will be issued out after you leave the instance dungeon.]

“Hmm?”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked, so much so that his hand tilted and he almost steered the car into the side rails.

“They completed the quest? It took them this long?” Chen Xiaolian was both surprised and elated.

He quickly parked the car beside the street and hastily produced his mobile phone to call Qiao Qiao.

Most unfortunately, his call failed to connect!

“Could it be they are still inside the research institute, within the Bio-transformation Faction’s area?” Chen Xiaolian frowned. After thinking about it, he quickly sent a message over, relaying his current situation to them.

As to whether or not Qiao Qiao could receive the message, he could only leave it to fate.

...

After pondering over his current situation in detail, Chen Xiaolian came up with an idea.

First, he started up the car and went to fill it up with gas. Next, he drove it over to a special place!

That place was a huge parking lot.

Chen Xiaolian stopped the car in the entrance.

He was currently within an open space. He could clearly observe in every direction.

If Tian Lie were to appear, Chen Xiaolian would be able to catch sight of him from far away. There would be enough time for him to turn around and flee.

Considering this car that he had picked himself, he felt that there was a high chance that he would be able to escape.

It was not as though he had not thought of other methods... for example, flying a helicopter to the skies.

Unfortunately, he does not know how to operate a helicopter.

“Roddy oh Roddy, just how long do you intend to keep on sleeping...” Chen Xiaolian let out a bitter smile.

He stared at Roddy who was breathing evenly and continued observing for some time...

Suddenly, an idea sparked within to his mind! Chen Xiaolian recalled something!

It was as though some form of impulse was driving him. He hesitated for a moment before retrieving an item from the system's Item Box.

An energy source!

The energy source within Chen Xiaolian's hand glowed faintly. He then brought it closer to Roddy.

Instantly, the glow of light emitted by the energy source increased!

Chen Xiaolian's heart became tense and he brought the energy source even closer to Roddy. Then, he simply shoved the energy source into Roddy's hand.

Something strange happened!

The energy source abruptly dissolved within Roddy's hand. Next, it transformed into what appeared to be streams of data and disappeared into Roddy's body!

"Hmm?"

Chen Xiaolian was surprised and he hesitated.

Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

Even so, Chen Xiaolian proceeded to retrieve another energy source and placed it on Roddy's hand.

The same scene unfolded before him: The energy source dissolved into streams of data and disappeared...

Next, the third energy source... then, the fourth energy source...

The moment the fifth energy source transformed into streams of data and entered Roddy's body...

Chen Xiaolian held his breath as he stared at his good friend.

Next, Roddy's eyelids fluttered lightly a few times.

Chen Xiaolian thought about it for a moment; then, he quickly nudged open Roddy's eyelids to check it out.

"Eh?"

Underneath Roddy's eyelids, the pupils of his eyes have seemingly turned into an incomparably deep colour of orange! It was as though some form of radiance was moving about in a circular manner!

As Chen Xiaolian was raising his hand to deliver a slap onto Roddy's face, Roddy suddenly opened his eyes!

"Hey! Why are you lifting your hand so high up? You aren't thinking about slapping me, are you?"

Hearing his familiar voice, Chen Xiaolian exclaimed in surprise and pulled Roddy up. He grabbed onto Roddy's neck and shook him vigorously. "Holy shit! Are you finally awake now?"

"Stop shaking! Stop shaking! My neck will break!" Roddy struggled to extricate himself from Chen Xiaolian's grasp and gasped for breath. "Holy shit... that nearly killed me!"

Roddy then looked at Chen Xiaolian. "Thankfully you are smart enough to figure it out; using the energy source to save me."

"Hmm?" Chen Xiaolian's face revealed surprise. "What do you mean?"

"I..." Roddy let out a bitter smile and pointed at his head. "Truth be told, I have always been awake! More accurately, I had never lost consciousness! The things that happened within the underground research institute, I know of them all. I could hear it and also feel it. Unfortunately, I could not control my body. I was unable to move, speak or even open my eyes. It was like I had... lost control of my own body."

"You mean to say, you knew about me fighting against Tian Lie?"

"... I know," Roddy forced out a smile. "You've got some huge balls on you."

"Son of a bitch! This senior had to fight with my life on the line while you slept in the side-lines! You should have gotten up and help me!" Chen Xiaolian resentfully grabbed hold of Roddy's neck again.

"Quit grabbing my neck," Roddy gave a distressed smile. "It is not as though there was anything I could do about it. If you had not used the

energy source to save me, I do not even know how much longer I will have to continue in that vegetative state. This time, I nearly killed myself! If I knew this would happen, I would have listened to you and not rashly used my skill on the Mech.”

“That is right! The Mech!” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes were bulging out. “Where is the Mech? The system prompt I received stated that we have already seized the research results of the Mechanical Faction! Where did you send the Mech to?”

“I... adopted it!” Roddy’s mouth split into a grin and he could not help but let out a gleeful burst of laughter.

“Adopted?”

“That is right! Adopted!” Roddy spread out both his hands and laughed out loud. “A Floater for a pet? So what?! This senior also has a pet! My pet is THE MECH!! Wa ha ha ha ha! With this, I am now a true mech pilot!”

...

Chapter 153: Now You See?

The Mech?

A pet?

Chen Xiaolian stared at Roddy as he quickly digested the main issue of the matter.

“You mean to say, that Mech is not simply just a machine? It... it is not an inanimate object?”

“En!” Roddy had a very serious expression on his face. “More accurately, it is a living mechanical object. Perhaps, it is similar to the Floater, a mechanical life form. That is why the system would consider it as a pet.”

“Holy shit!” Chen Xiaolian exhaled deeply and stared at Roddy. Then he said in earnest. “Bro, you’ve hit the jackpot!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly became excited and he grabbed Roddy’s clothes. “Mech! It is THE MECH argh!”

Roddy snickered. “This time around, the harvest is truly considerable. This Mech is very versatile. It could engage in both air and land battles, and it possesses extremely powerful melee and ranged battle capabilities. According to the system’s evaluation of its initial setting, its melee and ranged capabilities are both at [A] Class. Its Melee Ability is at [A] Class, its Energy Points is at [A] Class and its Growth Capacity is at... [A+]!”

Chen Xiaolian lost his composure.

[A+]?

Holy shit!

This senior had to struggle through so much hardship, nearly losing my life back in the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang in order to get my hands on that [A] Class Bai Qi!

This little bugger... all he did was sleep his way through... and he got his hands on an [A+] Class Mech!

There is only one step between that and [S] Class argh!

“First Xia Xiaolei, now you! All of you are just bursting with good luck! You fellows are all main characters! Get over here! Let me look at your head, let me see your main character’s radiant aura!” Chen Xiaolian gave a begrudging smile.

Chen Xiaolian then laughed out. “Come on then, summon out the Mech and let me bask in its beauty! This time, there is no need to fear Tian Lie anymore! [A+] Class!”

Roddy’s expression quickly turned somewhat embarrassed. “About that...”

“What is it?”

“There is a restriction to its usage.”

“Of course I know there will be restriction in its usage,” Chen Xiaolian waved his hand. “It is an [A+] Class high-end item after all. What is the restriction?”

After Roddy answered him, Chen Xiaolian’s expression turned awkward.

...

Roddy’s skill was ‘Mechanical Heart’. With this skill, it was inevitable that he would enter the mechanical and technological route of development. Thus, War Pets of the mech type such as the Floater would be most suitable for him.

However, the level for Roddy’s Mechanical Heart skill was not high enough.

As for this Mech, it was of the [A+] Class – what does that mean? This situation was no different to having a loser forcing himself to marry a fair and wealthy miss!

This [A+] Mech was a High-class mechanical life form. In Roddy’s case, it just so happened that his Mechanical Heart skill was able to meet the necessary condition to link up with this mechanical life form, allowing him to acquire this Mech.

Unfortunately, there was a problem... his skill level needed to be high in

order to control the Mech. Roddy's 'Mechanical Heart' skill, however, did not make the cut.

Under such circumstances, certain restrictions will be imposed, usually in the form of time limit in usage.

The current level that Roddy's Mechanical Heart skill has could only allow him to summon the Mech to do battle for...

"18 seconds," Roddy gave a distressed smile.

Chen Xiaolian: "... ..."

Chen Xiaolian could not restrain himself and he pulled an 'are you kidding me' face. "Only 18 seconds? Are you kidding me? Even the ads you get on Youtube are longer than that! [1]"

Roddy spread out his arms. "At present, my skill level is too low. The amount of time I can summon the Mech out to do battle is only that long. In the future, once I increase the level of my skill, the time limit would be increased. En, after summoning it, there will be a cool down period of 24 hours. By the way, the summoning time can be utilized cumulatively. In other words, within the 24 hours, I can summon it out for a few seconds then summon it back. Then, I can summon it out again... in short, as long as the time summoned does not exceed 18 seconds, I can keep summoning it out."

Chen Xiaolian sighed. "That is quite the good news. However, 18 seconds is just too short."

...

"So, you were abandoned?"

Tian Lie looked at Nagase Komi who remained huddled inside the pickup truck. Then, he tore out the door of the truck and pulled the bald girl out from the truck. After that, he tossed Nagase Komi down onto the ground. There was a playful smile on Tian Lie's face. "What a pitiful thing."

Tears trickled down Nagase Komi's face as she cried. "Don... do not hurt

me... I beg you... I beg you... please do not hurt me.”

Tian Lie looked at the flame tattoo on the girl’s neck and suddenly smiled out. He pointed at the tattoo with his finger and asked. “What does that mean?”

“Just... it is just a totem,” Nagase Komi was momentarily stunned. “I... I do not know the specifics of it. I just... just feel that it looks very cool.”

“Very cool?” Tian Lie gave a faint smile. “Interesting. It is indeed quite cool.”

Tian Lie’s eyes flashed and a flame totem tattoo appeared on his neck. After inspecting the tattoo through the pickup truck’s mirror, he smiled. “Not bad, I like its shape.”

After saying that, Tian Lie patted Nagase Komi’s bald head and said. “Isn’t this better? Hair is such an unnecessary existence.”

“You... are you going to kill me?” Nagase Komi shivered.

“...” Tian Lie regarded her before suddenly saying. “Now that you have been abandoned by your Guild Leader, don’t you feel angry?”

Nagase Komi did not say anything; her lips were pursed together tightly.

“Ha ha ha ha ha,” Tian Lie laughed. “You little brat, I like you. You see, the both of us have the same hair style.”

At the same time, his eyes suddenly turned grim and he spoke out in a low tone of voice. “... being abandoned, that is the kind of thing I hate the most.”

Tian Lie then raised his head and looked at Nagase Komi. “I will give you a choice.”

...

“Hmm?”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes suddenly flickered.

[System prompt: Your guild member Nagase Komi had left your guild.]

...

“From today onward, you are my pet,” Tian Lie looked at the bald girl and rubbed his own bald head. “Even though the system does not allow the adoption of participants as pets, I, senior Tian Lie cares not! If I say you are my pet, then you are my pet! From today onward, you will be under my protection! If anyone bullies you, just say out senior Tian Lie’s name!”

Nagase Komi looked on with fear at this powerful person who was standing before her.

A system prompt appeared before her.

[System prompt: You have applied to become a member of ‘Thorned Flower Guild’. Please wait for inspection].

“You... are you going to let me go? You are not going to kill me?” Nagase Komi looked at Tian Lie gingerly.

“I generally do not kill women. Naturally... those Floating Angels are an exception. I detest those winged bastards the most,” Tian Lie laughed.

“Then... will you still go and kill my Guild Leader...”

“Listen up!” Tian Lie’s expression suddenly darkened and he reached out to pinch Nagase Komi’s chin. Tian Lie spoke out coldly. “You have already left his guild. As of now, he is no longer your Guild Leader, understood?”

“... yes,” Nagase Komi shrank back and nodded her head. At this moment, this Japanese girl’s submissive nature was forced out.

“All right, for now, you can stay here. I will keep on hunting,” Tian Lie stretched his waist and laughed. “There is not much time left. It is about time I finish up the hunt!”

“I... I do not know Guild Leader... ah, what I mean to say is... I do not know where they are hiding,” Nagase Komi quickly said.

“I do not need you to tell me that,” Tian Lie grinned. “Relax, I will find them soon enough.”

Tian Lie suddenly leaned close to Nagase Komi’s face, nearly coming into contact with her nose. He then whispered. “Let me show you

something fun. Do you like magic?”

“Ma... magic?”

Tian Lie snickered. Next, he stared into Nagase Komi’s eyes and abruptly shouted aloud. “BANG!”

Tian Lie’s action shocked Nagase Komi and she quickly shrank back her head. Then, she heard Tian Lie issuing a long laugh.

Subsequently, Nagase Komi watched as Tian Lie, who was standing before her suddenly dissolve away!

Tian Lie’s body had transformed into a clump of light that resembled silvery liquid!

Next, countless faint silver coloured streams of data flowed out at a rapid pace in every direction! The streams of data seeped into the ground, into the surrounding houses, walls, buildings...

The countless streams of data kept flowing out at a rapid pace and soon, they all disappeared.

“Go... gone?” Nagase Komi stared with wide-open eyes.

...

“How much longer?”

“A little more than an hour,” Chen Xiaolian anxiously checked the time and said in a low tone of voice. “Maybe we are lucky and he is unable to locate us.”

Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows as he carefully examined their surroundings, turning his gaze back and forth the street.

At that moment, his face suddenly contorted and he shouted loudly. “Look there!”

On both sides of the street, the metal fences, metal frames of the houses, the cars parked by the street... and even the walls of the tall buildings...

Streams of data appeared, flowing through them!

The streams of data flowed through the metal materials... unfortunately for them, this city was covered with metal!

“It is Tian Lie!” Chen Xiaolian’s face sank and he abruptly shouted. “Bloody Hell! He has this type of trick up his sleeve! We need to move!”

As he said that, Chen Xiaolian had already started up the car. Then, he stepped down heavily onto the throttle of the car and the car roared out before charging its way out from the parking lot.

Countless streams of data flowed in from every direction and they converged in the middle of the road. In but moments, Tian Lie’s figure appeared!

Observing the car roaring away from him, Tian Lie curled the corners of his lips. He then got into a posture of an athlete that was getting ready to start running. “I am coming!”

He bolted forward, taking great strides each as he sped across the street like a whirlwind!

“He is coming!” Roddy who was looking at the rear view mirror shouted out. “Damn it! His running speed is just too fast!”

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. He had already stepped on the throttle until it reached its limit.

Seeing a crossroad before them, Chen Xiaolian abruptly turned the steering wheel, causing the whole car to drift into the other street! Roddy shouted out in shock as his body was thrown onto the door. From there, he was able to see the curve shaped tyre marks left by the car.

“Holy shit! Your driving skills have improved a lot!”

“Stop spouting nonsense!” Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. “Help me keep an eye on him!”

“I got him in my sights!” Roddy shouted as he gazed at the back of the car. “He is still chasing us!”

“Damn it!”

Chen Xiaolian slammed heavily down onto the steering wheel.

At that moment, countless streams of data gushed forward from the buildings on both sides of the street! The streams of data converged together and moved after them like a surge of flood water!

This was not the only street where such a scenario was taking place. If one were to observe the city from the skies, one would see that within this city area, the countless streams of data were rapidly rushing through large tracts of the city area. Those streams of data then came together as it moved toward them!

“In front!”

Roddy suddenly exclaimed loudly, pointing to the area of the street ahead!

A stream of data flashed through the surface of a traffic light and the traffic light collapsed as a result, falling onto the middle of the street!

Chen Xiaolian cursed out loudly and he quickly turned the steering wheel, veering the car to the left and into a small street. Along the way, they smashed through two trash bins and an iron wire fence!

Their car finally charged out from the other end of the street and into another main road. Observing the surroundings, Chen Xiaolian noticed a five to six-storey building emitting the sounds of metal twisting.

The streams of data flowed past the building, following which the building then collapsed down! It was as though an invisible axe had cleaved the building into two!

A loud rumbling sound resonated outward as the tall building collapsed down onto the road, blocking the way.

All the roads were sealed!

Chen Xiaolian glanced at the rear view mirror and saw that Tian Lie had already caught up. Chen Xiaolian shouted. “Roddy, hang on tight!”

Like a wild horse, their car rushed toward the surface of the building that was now lying upon the main road!

The car smashed directly through the building’s glass wall, its body

jolting as a result before charging into the interior of the building!

Inside the car, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy felt as though they were charging through a raging sea. The car smashed its way through several doors and walls...

Thankfully, the tall building was a frame structure building and the walls of the building was not too strong. The car that they were in smashed its way through the interior of the building before finally smashing its way out from the other side!

The car landed, the tyres scraped against the ground and even the bumper fell onto the ground, causing a long line of sparks to burst forth.

Before Chen Xiaolian could release a sigh of relief, the expression on both him and Roddy fell!

On the road before them, the earth suddenly shook and a crack appeared upon the ground!

Suddenly, a huge piece of the ground suddenly rose up!

Streams of data flowed through a metal pipe fixed beneath the ground and the metal pipe had abruptly twisted upward, causing the ground before them to crack apart in half!

The crack upon the road was at least two meters in width!

“Charge forward!” Roddy yelled.

Chen Xiaolian pushed the car to its highest speed and it flew up, leaping through the sky...

It managed to cross the crack upon the road. However, as the car landed, a bang could be heard and the car suddenly skidded.

“The tyre burst!” Chen Xiaolian roared out as he attempted to control the steering wheel. Unfortunately, he was unable to bring the car under control and it swerved into a house at the left side of the road.

With a boom, the hood of the car popped upward and the body of the car slammed into the wall. Then, the car’s engine died...

“Cough cough cough...”

Both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were pressed onto by airbags. Chen Xiaolian tore off the airbag, kicked the door of the car outward and stepped out.

From the other side of the car, Roddy too was climbing out from the car.

As the two of them were straightening themselves, they saw Tian Lie smiling as he leapt through the crack on the road. After landing, Tian Lie then sauntered toward them.

“Hello again, little rookie Guild Leader,” Tian Lie’s eyes were fixed onto Chen Xiaolian. “Back then, you asked me if I have an immortal body, right? Well... now you see!”

1 The sentence in the raw actually translates to “Even the ads you get when watching shows on PPTV is longer than that.” PPTV is a peer-to-peer streaming video freeware that is quite popular. While it is not quite similar, the only Western equivalent I can think of is Youtube.

Chapter 154: Angel

Chen Xiaolian looked at Tian Lie. Without hesitation, Chen Xiaolian summoned out Bone Crusher Axe and howled as he pounced forward. As he was soaring through the air, the axe in his hand flashed out and he unleashed Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes skill! At the same time, Chen Xiaolian also summoned out his Four-Eyed War Cat!

Garfield split out into three doppelgangers!

One human and three cats soared through the air, pouncing toward Tian Lie!

Keng!

Bone Crusher Axe struck Tian Lie's shiny, bald head and a clear sound rang out, following the resulting burst of sparks.

The axe struck Tian Lie's head, but Chen Xiaolian felt his hand going numb instead!

Tian Lie sneered and spread out both his arms, each facing left and right respectively. Then, his arms shot out through the air to grab hold of the neck of two incoming Garfield doppelgangers. At the same time, he raised his left leg and lashed out at the third Garfield doppelganger, sending it flying through the air!

Tian Lie then turned his gaze toward Chen Xiaolian, who was wielding the Bone Crusher Axe. Tian Lie sneered and asked. "Can you cut through?"

"..." Chen Xiaolian's heart sank!

Tian Lie suddenly revealed a grin. Next, he raised his head and slammed his head forward!

A loud bang rang out as Tian Lie's forehead struck Bone Crusher Axe! Then, a loud cracking sound followed.

Bone Crusher Axe was shattered into broken fragments! The enormous power behind the headbutt carried over to Chen Xiaolian and he was

thrown backward, the handle of Bone Crusher Axe still held within his hand.

Chen Xiaolian was directly thrown a distance of seven to eight meters backward and his body smashed into a wall beside the road. The wall was a simple wall made for a shop and Chen Xiaolian's body was thrown through the walls and into the interior of the shop!

Tian Lie sneered, both hands grabbing tightly onto the two Garfield doppelgangers. The two Garfield doppelgangers struggled against Tian Lie with their [A-] strength. However, they were unable to break free from Tian Lie's hold.

Then, Tian Lie raised up his hands and slammed the two Garfield doppelgangers forcefully down the ground!

Two "bang" sounds erupted and the two Garfield doppelgangers burst apart, transforming into a clump of light before disappearing!

As for the third Garfield doppelganger that was kicked away by Tian Lie, he got up and roared out. After that, he unleashed his Cat's Roar skill.

The shockwave brought by the Cat's Roar skill shot forward, striking Tian Lie and causing his body to shake. However, Tian Lie did not falter. Instead, he smiled. "You can shout, so can I!"

Tian Lie suddenly opened his mouth. His mouth transformed into liquid metal and it suddenly enlarged to become as big as a hippotamus. A loud roar boomed outward and a shockwave blasted out from his mouth. The shockwave struck Garfield head-on and he was sent flying. The attack also caused a distant fire hydrant to splinter apart and water sprayed out from it to form a towering column of water with a height of over ten meters!

The attack left Garfield on the brink of death as he lay on the ground!

In but moments, an [A-] Class pet was defeated!

Chen Xiaolian had already crawled out of the rubble. Seeing Garfield on the ground, Chen Xiaolian quickly summoned Garfield back into the

system.

“What other tricks do you have?” Tian Lie slowly stepped toward Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian gasped for breath and felt his whole body aching in pain as blood trickled down both his mouth and nose.

The Bone Crusher Axe he was holding in his hand had been broken, leaving only the handle. The [B] Class weapon had been utterly shattered.

“Son of a bitch,” Chen Xiaolian cursed out in a low tone.

At that moment, a gust of wind blew forward from Tian Lie’s left.

Roddy held the door of a car that he ripped out and descended, slamming down together with the door!

Tian Lie turned his head and observed as Roddy soared through the air toward him. Then, Tian Lie suddenly delivered a kick at Roddy!

With a “thud”, the car door positioned before Roddy was deformed inward and his forward trajectory was propelled backward by the immense power behind the kick. Roddy who was still holding onto the car door was sent flying backward and he slammed down onto a metal fence beside the road. The resulting impact caused the metal fence to deform into the shape of a concave!

Roddy climbed back up and spat out blood from his mouth.

“Roddy!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted out loud, both his hands trying to prop himself up. However, he was unable to get up.

He quickly tried to think of a method.

What other methods are there left? What methods?

Do I have any other trump cards?

Exemption Card?

Exemption Card only works to exempt me against the system’s attacking monsters. It does not affect other participants...

In that case...

Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth!

He propped his upper body up.

The final resort! At any rate... I will die if I use it, but the same applies if I do not use it...

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and stared at Tian Lie decisively.

There was a complicated expression on Tian Lie's face. He stepped forward slowly toward Chen Xiaolian. Then, with a flash, he arrived beside Chen Xiaolian. He then used one hand to catch Chen Xiaolian, raise him up and pin him to the wall.

"Before I kill you, there is one thing you need to do."

"..." Chen Xiaolian had his neck held and he stared at Tian Lie.

Tian Lie suddenly extended one hand and pressed it onto the wall. Streams of data instantly appeared from the hand to flow into the wall.

"Hey! My little pet! Can you hear me?"

...

Nagase Komi was in a dazed state as she slumped by the side of a street. Suddenly, she heard Tian Lie's voice coming from a loudspeaker atop a roadside electrical shop.

"Hey! My little pet, can you hear me?"

Nagase Komi. "... .."

...

"Guess what, I am now together with the Guild Leader that abandoned you," Tian Lie curled the corners of his lips. "I told you before, I detest people being abandoned the most! That is why, before he dies, I will get him to apologize to you, my little pet!"

Tian Lie laughed loudly and he stared at Chen Xiaolian. It was as though there was a clump of flames deep within Tian Lie's eyes and he spoke softly. "In times of danger, you did not hesitate to abandon your

own companion in order to ensure your own survival. Ignoring the responsibility that a companion should carry and instead pursuing your own survival? Does such a kind of selfish behaviour not warrant being spit upon? What do you have to say?!"

Chen Xiaolian gasped and struggled for breath.

Tian Lie continued. "As someone who abandons others, have you ever thought about the feelings of grief felt by those that were abandoned? Their feelings of hopelessness, their feelings of despair! You have probably never bothered considering all those, right? Or perhaps you were only focused on your own survival! As one who abandons others, you probably did not even think about those factors! With such a character, how could you be fit to be a comrade? How could you even be fit to be a Guild Leader?"

The tone of Tian Lie's voice was intense and it appeared to be carrying a faint sense of grievance.

Then, Tian Lie finally took a deep breath and stared at Chen Xiaolian. "Now, take advantage of whatever time you have left before you die, and apologize to the one you abandoned! Hmm, that girl you abandoned... what was her name again... Nagase Komi, right! That is her name, my new pet!"

After saying that, Tian Lie suddenly released his grip, allowing Chen Xiaolian to fall onto the ground. "Say it! Say it loudly! Apologize loudly! Let her hear it!"

Chen Xiaolian lay on the ground.

At the same instant, the streams of data flowing through the wall brought Nagase Komi's voice over.

"Guild... Guild Leader?"

...

"Guild... Guild Leader?"

Nagase Komi stood up, ran toward the electrical shop by the street, and

shouted loudly into the loudspeaker. She clenched her fists and cried loudly. “Why? Why did you abandon me? Back when we were underground, you promised me! As long as I listen to you, obey your orders, do the things you ask of me, you will protect me! You will bring me out alive! But why? Why did you abandon me in the middle of the street?”

“Back when we were underground, I was feeling so scared! So much so that I kept on crying! Even so, I chose to trust you. Thus, no matter how fearful I felt, I kept of doing my best to do whatever you ask of me!

“Back when we were escaping, I was the one who found the underwater equipment! But why did you toss me onto the street and leave?”

“Could it be it is because I am a new member who cannot fight, thus making me someone of no value? Does that mean you can abandon me? Does that mean you can toss me away like I am some sacrificial chess piece?”

Sitting on the ground, Nagase Komi cried and held her head. “I... I had originally chosen to believe in you. I thought that you are a good leader. I... I am so scared! Wu wu wu wu...”

...

Hearing the crying sounds of the girl, Chen Xiaolian was startled!

He gasped for breath and raised his head to look at the sneering expression on Tian Lie’s face.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly took a deep breath and spoke out in a slow and calm tone of voice. “Nagase Komi, can you hear my voice?”

“... can!”

“All right, then. I will tell you now, I did not abandon you,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly. “I will neither abandon a comrade nor let them become cannon fodders like a sacrificial chess piece!

“You are a new member of my guild. However, I have indeed chosen to accept you. After going through my test, your performance has been

satisfactory. Thus, as the Guild Leader, I will certainly keep my end of the bargain: To let you live!

“Nagase Komi, the reason I left you on the street is because I am clear that the one Tian Lie wants to kill is not you. The one Tian Lie is aiming for is me and my group.

“If I have the ability to protect you, I would never leave you back there. However, I am clear that I do not have this ability. Under such circumstances, letting you leave my side would be the best way to protect you, do you understand?

“Even if you were to stay by my side, like me, you would end up being caught by Tian Lie. There would not be much of a difference. Thus, allowing you to go alone would make it safer for you.

“At the very least, if we were together, the chances of being caught by Tian Lie is a 100 per cent. But, by leaving alone, your chances of living is around 50 per cent.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian smiled. “Now, do you understand?”

...

Nagase Komi was still seated on the ground, but her hands were no longer holding onto her head.

The bald headed girl raised her head and looked with a dazed expression at the loud speaker before her. “Is... is that true?”

...

“At the very least, you are still alive, are you not?” Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile.

...

Nagase Komi. “... Guild... Guild Leader...”

...

“Enough!” A flicker of hostility abruptly flashed through Tian Lie’s eyes. He then retracted his hand, causing the streams of data to disappear back

into his body and the connection was lost.

Tian Lie lowered his head to gaze upon Chen Xiaolian and he said.
“Lies!”

“What did you say?”

“I said, lies!” Fury was evident within Tian Lie’s expression. “You people who abandon others will always have a way with words to justify your actions! In the end, you just want to hide the shameful selfishness within your mind!”

Chen Xiaolian quietly regarded Tian Lie and suddenly gave a faint smile. “You... you must have had to suffer through some terrible experience before, haven’t you?”

“... what did you say?!” Tian Lie was immediately enraged. Tian Lie raised his leg and delivered a kick, which sent Chen Xiaolian flying away!

Chen Xiaolian’s body flew all the way from the inside of the shop onto the ground outside and his body rolled over twice before stopping, blood trickling down from his head, face and body.

“Xiaolian!”

Roddy was lying on the ground, blood seeping out from his mouth. Seeing Chen Xiaolian sent flying, Roddy attempted to crawl up but was incapable of doing so.

Tian Lie walked out from the shop and stared at Chen Xiaolian coldly. “Hypocrite! Liar! But that is fine, after all, you are going to die here! Now, before you die, is there anything else you want to say? Do you want to beg for mercy? Or do you want to cry?”

Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips and smiled. “Just now, you asked me if I have any other tricks. If I am not mistaken, I still have one that I have yet to use.”

“Oh?” Tian Lie sneered. “So, are you going to use it now?”

Chen Xiaolian stared at Tian Lie and took a deep breath.

“Overwhelming Sunlight Puri-“

However, before Chen Xiaolian could finish his last word...

At that instant...

BOOM!

A pillar of light descended from the skies!

It struck Tian Lie's body!

The upper half of his body burst apart from the damage taken while his lower half was thrown far away, a distance of over ten meters!

The ground was covered with silvery liquid metal.

Shocked, Chen Xiaolian raised his head and saw a tall metal figure floating above the skies.

Hovering beneath the sun, the figure spread out both its wings, seemingly blocking the descending rays from the sun and shrouding the figure in the shadows.

The figure was a metallic mech weapon resembling a humanoid mech armour!

Floating... Angel!

...

Nicole's entire body was enveloped within the layer of metal.

The visor of the sleek metal armour was opened.

This was the complete form of the 'Floating Angel'!

Behind Nicole, both wings were spread wide open and she resembled a metal angel hovering in the skies.

Nicole's right hand was extended outward and there was a clump of silvery light glowing on her palm. Clearly, it was some form of blast weaponry.

"Guild Leader, are you all right?"

Nicole's voice was very serious.

...

The Floating Angel quickly landed on the ground. It was then that Chen Xiaolian noticed there were two person holding onto the back of the Floating Angel. Those two were Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo!

Qiao Qiao did not appear to be in a good condition. Her hair was dishevelled and there were bloodstains on her face. As for Soo Soo, the protective suit she was wearing had been damaged.

After landing, Qiao Qiao quickly rushed over toward Chen Xiaolian and helped to prop him up.

“You... how did you all...”

“I received your message and hurried over,” Qiao Qiao quickly answered. “The Floating Angel’s flying speed is very fast. Thankfully, we were able to make it in time.”

“Where are the others?” Chen Xiaolian felt shocked. “The rest of them...”

Qiao Qiao’s eyes relayed a certain bitterness within them. However, it was not from loss. She answered. “Lun Tai and Bei Tai are badly injured. We temporarily placed them by the road to let them recover. Xia Xiaolei is there with them to help protect them.”

After saying that, Qiao Qiao suddenly produced something, which she stabbed into Chen Xiaolian’s arm!

Chen Xiaolian lowered his head and saw that it was a transparent syringe. Inside it was a faint aquamarine coloured liquid.

“This is...”

Chapter 155: Tian Lie's Final Form

“The Bio-transformation Faction’s research results,” Qiao Qiao replied as she looked at Chen Xiaolian in the eye. “Power Propagation Serum!”

Power Propagation Serum?

Chen Xiaolian watched as the faint aquamarine coloured liquid entered his body...

[System prompt: You have utilized an [A] class item, the ‘Power Propagation Serum’.

[A. You can now select one attribute to enhance. The attribute will be enhanced by one class.

[B. Unlimited Propagation skill activated! All attributes can be restored without any limit or constraints. The restoration cannot exceed the class of the existing attribute.]

Chen Xiaolian. “... ..”

...

The first benefit of this serum is to allow the enhancement of one attribute up by one class – this benefit is easy to understand.

The second benefit... all attributes can be restored without limits... does that mean I now no longer need healing medicinal substances? Even if I get hurt, as long as I do not die, I will... regenerate?

As Chen Xiaolian was considering this, his face suddenly lit up!

He suddenly thought of something important!

This serum... for others, they would only obtain those two benefits from it.

But for Chen Xiaolian...

Unlimited restoration of all attributes!

This means...

The Goddess of Dawn’s Overwhelming Sunlight Purification skill, which

will combust my properties in order to attack...

That Great Art of Demonic Dissolution... will no longer be a problem for me!

...

Before this, the biggest issue plaguing Chen Xiaolian was that his trump card, his exclusive skill 'Goddess of Dawn's Overwhelming Sunlight Purification' was no different to a suicide attack.

Although its attacking power was very strong, once it was utilized, all his attributes would be combusted away! After using the skill, Chen Xiaolian was as good as dead!

Back then, Chen Xiaolian had used a Genetic Enhancement Serum to restore and enhance his attributes to [B] class. However, there was a restriction for the usage of Genetic Enhancement Serums, it could only be used once!

Thus, Chen Xiaolian had never been able to utilize the Goddess of Dawn's skill anymore.

But now...

With this serum that could restore attributes without any limitation...

...

Chen Xiaolian felt strength returning to his body. This feeling was akin to that when he was using Healing Beast Blood. The injuries on his body, both internal and external quickly closed up. Then, Chen Xiaolian tried to prop himself up.

"This item... if you use it on me... then you all..."

"Do not worry, everyone has one!" Qiao Qiao gave a faint smile. However, she turned her head away slightly.

"Oppa!" Soo Soo stood beside them and bit down hard on her lips. "When we completed the quest, we found a total of six serums. The number is probably based on the number of people who completed the quest. Because the group sent to complete the Bio-transformation Faction

quest had only a total of six people...”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly turned his head to look at Qiao Qiao!

He immediately understood!

Qiao Qiao... she had given him her own serum!

...

Nicole quickly went to Roddy. She pulled him up and fed him a Healing Type Beast Blood.

“We need to hurry and move!” Nicole turned to Chen Xiaolian “That fellow will be back soon!”

Chen Xiaolian stood up. “There is not much time left! Let us leave here immediately!”

However, at that same instant...

Countless streams of data abruptly rushed in from all directions, converging together! All the streams of data converged upon Tian Lie’s body that was lying on the road far away.

Then... it suddenly dispersed outward, resembling an explosion!

The dispersed streams of data flowed into the surrounding buildings, causing a high amount of liquid metal to flow out from the buildings. The amount of liquid metal flowing out gradually increased and they all fused into Tian Lie’s body.

His lower body stood up and expanded at a rapid pace!

All the houses, tall buildings and metal fences on both sides of the road fragmented and collapsed, no different from falling sand castles.

Innumerable reinforcing steel were transformed into liquid metal and were all extracted out of the buildings. Then, the streams of liquid metal flowed to Tian Lie’s body.

“Hurry up and run! It is going to collapse!”

Nicole grabbed Roddy with one hand. Her other hand grabbed hold of Chen Xiaolian while Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo got on Nicole’s back!

The Floating Angel flew upward. It blasted upward quickly and they were soon up in the skies.

Looking down from the skies, they saw Tian Lie's body increasing in size!

Vast amount of metal had converged onto his body. In but merely ten plus seconds, Tian Lie's body had become as big as a tall building! Additionally, his body was still expanding!

A faint silvery metal glow enveloped his entire body while streams of data could be seen lurking about, flowing at a fast pace upon his body.

Finally, behind Tian Lie, a pair of wings spread open!

It was just like...

A Floating Angel!

However, Tian Lie's pair of wings was black in colour.

Tian Lie's body shape also transformed rapidly. His external appearance gradually came to resemble a giant sized Floating Angel's mech form!

Nicole spoke with a trace of fear within her voice. "This... this is Tian Lie's final form! Angel Killer!"

Tian Lie's body had expanded until he was now seven or eight storeys tall!

After that...

Tian Lie suddenly sneered. He raised his head and gazed upon Nicole, who was flying up in the skies.

He quickly stretched out his left hand, smashing it heavily into a tall building beside him.

Innumerable streams of data flowed into the building. After that, Tian Lie pulled out his hand and a sharp sword was 'drawn' out from the building!

Tian Lie had transformed all the metals within the building in but an instant. The metal materials were all transformed into liquid metal and

pulled out! Next, through the transformation powers of the streams of data, the metal was transformed into a sharp sword!

A gleaming black coloured sword!

“Little angel! You are finally here! You are my most delicious prey!”

Tian Lie laughed long and loud and his voice was carried over, penetrating through Heaven and Earth. It was as though there were countless loudspeakers on his body.

Next, Tian Lie flapped the wings behind his back, raising a tempest and the rubble that was left over from the collapsed buildings were all swept away! Tian Lie’s gigantic body soared into the skies!

Compared to this gigantic monster, the mech form of Nicole’s Floating Angel was no different from a little doll.

“Go!”

Chen Xiaolian roared.

Nicole’s Floating Angel form instantly activated her turbines and she transformed into a silver beam of light, speeding away from the place.

“There is no escape!”

Tian Lie bellowed loudly and he abruptly swung his black coloured sword at Nicole!

A stream of silver light suddenly burst out, with Tian Lie at its centre.

It was just like a resulting cloud from a nuclear explosion and a shockwave spread outward!

The Floating Angel, who was still in flight, was slammed upon by the violent shockwave interweaved with the silver light and she fell haphazardly!

“Hold on tight!”

Nicole screamed out as her Floating Angel form channelled more power to glide down and land upon the surface of a main road.

After placing Chen Xiaolian and the others down the ground, Nicole

said with a decisive expression. “He is using his final form! We cannot escape! The entire city is now under the control of his data stream! Right now, we can only fight to the death with him!”

After saying that, Nicole turned around and soared up into the sky!

The wings of her Floating Angel form suddenly burst out with an intense orange coloured light. Following that, Nicole’s Floating Angel form too, expanded at an insane pace!

The metallic materials on the Floating Angel appeared to be accumulating by itself. It was as though it was undergoing an assembly mode where it would automatically propagate itself!

Soon, the Floating Angel had expanded from a normal human body shape into a height of seven to eight meters.

It currently appeared like a medium sized mech.

Behind her, a pair of wings spread open, nearly 15 meters in length.

A lightning like beam shot out from Nicole’s hand to form a military blade. Subsequently, the orange coloured flames from her turbines erupted and her figure transformed into lightning, charging toward Tian Lie!

Floating Angel vs Angel Killer!

...

“Go to hell!!!”

The Floating Angel’s wings spread open and she dashed forward, the blade of light in her hand slashing viciously at Tian Lie’s neck!

Tian Lie’s black coloured sword quickly intercepted it and the blade of light struck the black coloured sword to produce a burst of radiance.

A booming sound exploded outward and the Floating Angel’s body was thrown backward. She then hovered in the sky, maintaining a distance from Tian Lie. The Floating Angel opened her left palm and a sphere of light rapidly condensed into being before shooting out toward Tian Lie!

Tian Lie sneered and the black wings spread out to cover his huge body. Then, a silver sphere of light appeared, enveloping his body.

The beam of light fired out by Nicole struck the sphere of light, but was broken into lines of electrical current before dissipating!

“Too weak! Is your energy only at that feeble level?” Tian Lie laughed out loudly. “It seems you are just a weak little fledgling angel!”

Tian Lie smiled derisively and extended his left hand as well.

Upon his huge palm, a sphere of black coloured light appeared before shooting forward at Nicole!

Nicole gritted her teeth and she howled, her pair of wings moving to envelop her. At the same time, a sphere of light appeared, covering her body...

However...

The black beam of light struck Nicole's sphere of light and shook for a bit...

Then...

A loud boom echoed out!

The black beam of light pierced through the sphere of light and Nicole was struck by the attack. The attack then sent her Floating Angel form flying.

The black beam of light continued onward, swallowing Nicole's body and slamming her onto a tall building. After that, she fell heavily onto the ground.

A loud bang was heard and the impact of her fall created a huge crater. The concrete steel underneath the ground was cracked from the impact as well. Nicole struggled to climb out from the ground, her left wing was already torn out.

Various damaged parts could be seen upon the surface of her Floating Angel's mech armour and sparks buzzed out from the damaged areas.

After crawling out from the ground, Nicole had no time to even stand up before Tian Lie's gigantic figure descended from the skies!

The huge black coloured sword swiped at Nicole and she was only able to raise her blade of light to block once.

A "clang" resounded!

The two swords clashed and electrical currents surged outward. Then, no longer able to endure the load, Nicole screamed out in pain and a burst of light shone out from her Floating Angel form before turning dim...

The blade of light broke apart and the Floating Angel's body was struck by the attack, causing her to be thrown backward again!

This time, she was sent skidding through the ground and an entire street was rendered into absolute ruin. Her head smashed into a house and her body lay prone among the fallen rubble.

"Too weak! Someone at this level can become a Floating Angel? Has the standard for Floating Angels fallen to this sorry state? This level of strength is too disappointing!"

Tian Lie raised his black coloured sword and stepped forward.

At that moment, a tiny figure quickly rushed out to stand before the Floating Angel.

Roddy raised his head and looked at the huge Tian Lie; he gazed at this huge being known as the 'Angel Killer'.

"If you want to kill her, you will have to get through me!"

Roddy's head was raised and a layer of data stream flashed through both his eyes!

...

Tian Lie showed no scruples as he lifted his massive feet and moved it, stamping down toward Roddy!

The foot descended and the area that Roddy was standing on was flattened. Qiao Qiao and the rest who were hiding some distant away

gasped!

Chen Xiaolian's face however remained calm. "Do not worry, that fellow won't die just yet... he is probably using his ultimate move!"

"Ulti... ultimate move?" Qiao Qiao stared quizzically.

...

...

Tian Lie's feet stamped down on Roddy as one would trample an ant to its death. After that, Tian Lie proceeded to move forward. However, a powerful force suddenly erupted out from beneath his feet!

The Angel Killer's gigantic body was flipped upside down by the force! The force was so powerful that his colossal body was thrown backward!

Tian Lie's colossal body was thrown back and he slammed into a row of buildings in succession. In the end, his body was stopped after ramming into a tall building.

Tian Lie shook his head, then he raised it to examine what was before him. A gigantic mechanical hand made of metal was extending outward from the surface of the ground where Roddy was standing!

Next, space itself cracked and a smooth area, which resembled a mirror, appeared on the surface of the ground. A colossal mech emerged from under the ground!

Coated in blue, silver, and black, the 18-meter tall humanoid Mech exuded an aura of dominance!

Within the Mech's chest position was a cockpit. Roddy's figure teleported into the cockpit.

"Bring it on, damned baldy!" Roddy's eyes were alight and he spat out viciously.

At the same time, within the interface, the countdown began!

18 seconds!

...

Within the cockpit, clumps of light appeared rapidly and they entered Roddy's body. This mode allowed for the connection of the body's neurons, causing a strange feeling to wash over him.

At this moment, he felt as though he had become one with the Mech's body!

Roddy did not hesitate to start up the Mech's battle mode!

...

The powerful turbines behind the Mech suddenly discharged a flaming burst of ions and the colossal Mech shot forward!

The gigantic 18 meter tall Mech sped through the long street like a tempest and arrived before Tian Lie in just a blink of an eye.

Before Tian Lie could even straighten himself out from the rubble of the tall building, the Mech had already arrived before him. A giant fist made of steel brutally connected with Tian Lie's head!

BOOM!

A loud and thunderous sound spread out!

Angel Killer's body suddenly came crashing down to the side. The combined force of the two metal giants caused whatever remained of the tall building to utterly collapse! As for Tian Lie's body, the power behind the fist caused his body to become embedded into the centre of the building.

The Mech had already rotated its other part of its body forward. From its right hand, a beam of light burst out!

Phantom Particle Beam Blade!

The Mech held the blade of light that was encased within the phantom particles and stabbed it ruthlessly into Tian Lie's chest!

The blade of light pierced through the Angel Killer's chest armour, eliciting a loud howl from Tian Lie. The black coloured sword in Tian Lie's hand was sent swiping over, knocking the blade of light away. The beam blade then cut a path through Tian Lie's chest, leaving a gash upon

his chest armour!

The black coloured sword and the blade of light smashed fiercely into each other and the colossal Mech's body was pushed back, tumbling backward.

The Mech quickly retreated. Roddy kept the blade of light and he moved the Mech's hand to the back.

From behind the Mech's body, Roddy retrieved out a high-energy beam rifle, holding it with the Mech's hands.

The muzzle of the rifle charged up and it flashed with light.

Chen Xiaolian was able to identify it immediately. The beam rifle that Fujino Masayoshi was using was an imitation of this weapon held by the Mech.

The huge muzzle finished charging up in but an instant! Its performance far exceeded that of the imitation!

A beam of light was fired out instantly!

Tian Lie had just gotten up, only to be struck by the beam of light in the chest!

A defensive sphere of light rapidly expanded out from Tian Lie's body.

This was the energy shield that the Floating Angel had failed to break through earlier!

The beam of light struck the surface of the energy shield. Instantly, the radiance bursting outward from the energy shield leapt up by several levels, becoming incomparably bright. It was as though a miniature sun had descended upon the Earth!

The immense momentum behind the beam of light forced Tian Lie's body backward, his feet almost losing grip of the ground. His entire body, wrapped within the sphere of light, was pushed backward. As a result, the houses and buildings within his path were all devastated.

Tian Lie's body itself was blasted backward by around 200 meters!

Finally, a tall building that was over ten storeys in height stopped the momentum that was thrusting Tian Lie backward. His body smashed into the tall building, causing a small portion of the building to break apart. The huge metal body was then stuck inside the framework of the tall building.

Unfortunately, the beam rifle was incapable of breaking through Tian Lie's energy shield!

"Damn it!"

Roddy who was seated inside the cockpit cursed out,

Time remaining: 11 seconds!

"The beam rifle is not powerful enough! Initialize the Multi-phase Beam Cannon!" Roddy's face had turned paper white.

The manipulation of neurons allowing him to connect with the Mech's body was quickly increasing the amount of mental energy consumed by his 'Mechanical Heart' skill.

Tian Lie emerged out of the tall building. Sparks of fire flashed out from the gaping wound on his chest, but he appeared oblivious to that fact. He revealed a ferocious grin as he raised the black coloured sword and pounced forward!

Black coloured flames gushed out from the turbines behind Tian Lie's pair of wings and his body transformed into something akin to black coloured lightning. In a blink of an eye, he had appeared before the Mech. He raised the black coloured sword up high and slashed down with it!

"Beam Shield!"

Phantom Particles sprayed out rapidly from the Mech's left arm. The resulting light transformed into a transparent shield! The black coloured sword in Tian Lie's hand slashed down onto the shield and a loud boom spread out.

Roddy suddenly coughed out a mouthful of blood!

Although the beam shield successfully blocked the strike from the

black coloured sword, the resulting impact carried over an immensely oppressive power. Despite only piloting the Mech's body, Roddy himself was linked to the Mech through the neuron connection and thus, was affected by the resulting impact.

As a result, he sprayed out a mouthful of blood!

The colossal Mech's body staggered and its left leg went down to its knee. Even so, it had its left arm raised, holding onto the beam shield and keeping Tian Lie's black coloured sword at bay.

Tian Lie gave another ferocious grin and the black coloured sword descended with lightning like speed, cleaving heavily onto the surface of the beam shield! A thunderous boom rang out once more!

The Mech was struck by the immense power of the resulting impact and the joints of its left leg trembled slightly.

Finally, Tian Lie shouted out loudly. "Die!"

His body leapt high up into the air, creating a distance of nearly 10 meters between him and the ground. Then, he descended! Descending together with his body was the black coloured sword, which struck down onto the beam shield!

BOOM!

The amount of load hammering down upon the beam shield on the Mech's left arm was too overwhelming! As a result, the beam shield created from the Phantom Particles collapsed! Due to the disappearance of the beam shield, Tian Lie's black coloured sword pierced through and struck the Mech's body!

The sword blow struck the Mech's armour that was made of powerful yet unknown materials and cut into the Mech's left arm!

The blow left a wound that was one third in depth!

A scream escaped Roddy's mouth as the neuron connection brought the pain felt by the Mech's body into his own. The intense amount of pain caused Roddy's body to tremble uncontrollably.

The attack knocked him backward and the Mech tumbled down.

At that moment, at the chest area of the Mech just beneath the cockpit position, the surface of the armour there opened up to form the flat shaped muzzle of a blaster.

“Multi-phase Beam Cannon! Obliterate him to his death!”

Beam particles gathered upon the muzzle of the blaster at a fast rate before transforming into a thick energy beam, which blasted outward!

As the distance between them was too close, Tian Lie had no time to activate his energy shield. Thus, the blast from the Multi-phase Beam Cannon charged toward his chest!

Tian Lie was only able to quickly bring up his black coloured sword, positioning the broad surface of the sword before him to block the incoming attack. The energy beam slammed into Tian Lie, lifting him up into the skies! The energy beam struck the black coloured sword and a dazzling brilliance radiated outward!

After emitting several “zi zi” sounds, the black coloured sword shattered! Then, the energy beam smashed onto Tian Lie’s chest!

The Multi-phase Beam Cannon was the most powerful weapon among the Mech’s weapons system. Currently, that powerful energy beam discharged by the cannon was tearing its way into Tian Lie’s chest!

After the dazzling radiance from earlier faded, Tian Lie’s figure could be seen again. Upon the surface of his body armour, countless cracks had appeared! The energy beam charged into Tian Lie’s body and he swelled like an inflated balloon... energy rays burst out from the cracks...

BOOM!

Tian Lie’s body, that was sent flying up in the skies suddenly burst outward with light!

However, amid the mass of light, Tian Lie’s body struggled to maintain itself.

...

“No, not enough. Still not enough... It is still not enough!”

Nicole was kneeling on the ground, both her hands propping her body up as she raised her head to look at Tian Lie who was up in the skies.

A trace of decisiveness flashed through her eyes!

I can only... do that!

The broken external armour of her Floating Angel form suddenly came off.

The armour converged together before moving away from Nicole. Then, it shot upward in the direction of Roddy's Mech!

Nicole raised up one hand, opening her palm and used all her might to shout:

“Floater... FUSION!”

The Floater quickly arrived beside Roddy's Mech. The metal rings split apart and merged together with the Mech's body! Behind the Mech, the Floater released a metallic radiance and fused onto the Mech's back.

The Floater rapidly split apart and...

Behind the Mech, a pair of long wings made of light spread open!

The wings of light began taking form as it condensed out a solid body part.

Four on the left and four on the right! Eight shining golden wings spread out from the back of the Mech!

Floating Angel... Mech Fusion!

The Floater fused with the [A+] class Mech!

Through the Floater's skill, the two powerful mechanical life forms had become one!

Roddy who was seated inside the Mech's cockpit felt an intense pulse spreading through his body!

The lights of his neuron connection with the Mech suddenly radiated a

golden light. Subsequently, Roddy felt as though a flame was ignited within his body. His mental energy soared to an extreme level!

Naturally, there was a side effect... the countdown!

The countdown timer originally had another 8 seconds left upon it. However, now that the Mech had fused with the Floater, the amount of time left on the timer fell instantly to...

3 seconds!

External wise, a sphere of light appeared upon the surface of the Mech! Even the turbines behind the Mech appeared to have doubled in strength.

The eight golden wings spread open and the Mech jumped up into the skies, flying toward Tian Lie's position.

The Multi-phase Beam Cannon upon its chest continued blasting out its energy beam. However, the energy beam appeared more radiant, seemingly carrying an even greater level of power behind it!

The Mech ascended the skies and rapidly closed up the distance between it and Tian Lie.

The countdown timer...

2 seconds!

The Phantom Particle Beam Blade appeared from the Mech's hand. The beam blade wrapped within the Phantom Particles suddenly exploded with power. The length of the blade had shockingly increased, reaching a length of up to 10 meters! The beam blade that was originally faint orange in colour had now become a brilliant golden!

Countdown timer...

1 second!

Roddy howled out. "Die!"

The Mech appeared before Tian Lie!

Beam Blade!

Rise!

Descend!

A “chi” sound was heard as the Beam Blade struck Tian Lie’s forehead, cleaving straight through his body! From the head down to the chest, then the abdomen, then the waist...

Severed!

Tian Lie’s gigantic body was severed into two!

The bursts of energy rays escaping through the innumerable cracks upon the surface of his body finally found a breach.

High up in the skies, a dazzling flower of flames blossomed outward! It was as though a nuclear explosion had gone off in the middle of the skies.

In the middle of the loud explosion was Tian Lie. The Angel Killer’s gigantic body exploded into countless fragments, which were then engulfed by the spreading flames, turning them into ashes!

The immense explosion spread open rapidly, expanding up to a distance of several km and more within an instant.

However, once the blaze from the explosion travelled to the edge of Tokyo City, it appeared to have encountered an invisible barrier, which immediately cut off the blaze...

Even so, a huge cloud of light enveloped the skies above the entirety of Tokyo region.

The flaming embers descended like meteors falling from the skies and were burned out, leaving only silence.

Countdown timer...

0 seconds!

High above the skies, the figure of the Mech disappeared.

The colossal mechanical entity disappeared and Roddy’s figure could be seen plummeting straight down from the skies!

Roddy appeared to have lost his consciousness; both his eyes were shut and his body simply fell down.

At that moment, the Floater hovering in the skies suddenly opened up. Its eight long wings folded together and sped toward Roddy. Soon, it reached and caught hold of Roddy.

Nicole was kneeling on the ground, blood trickling down her mouth and tears glistening within her eyes. She forced out her hand and struggled to control the Floater with the last of her strength. The Floater caught hold of Roddy, reduced the speed of his fall, and landed gently on the ground. Nicole then spat out blood from her mouth and slumped onto the ground.

As for the Floater... it transformed into a clump of white light and disappeared.

“That fellow... is dead?”

Nicole raised her head and watched the embers falling down from the skies. There was no trace of Tian Lie, no flowing liquid metal, no streams of data!

Tears filled Nicole’s eyes and rolled down her cheeks. Then, she suddenly laughed.

“He was actually... killed?”

Plop!

Nicole slumped to the ground and fainted.

Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo ran forward, one toward Roddy and another one toward Nicole.

Chen Xiaolian struggled to stand up and raise his head, gazing at the skies...

The terrifying figure of that bald man was no more.

The terrifying streams of data was no more.

The terrifying flow of liquid metal too, was no more.

We really... managed to completely obliterate him?

Soo Soo pulled Roddy up. Roddy let out a weak laugh before tilting his head to the side and fainting.

At that moment however...

“Xiaolian!”

Qiao Qiao suddenly called out in a sharp voice. Chen Xiaolian turned and saw Qiao Qiao kneeling beside Nicole.

Qiao Qiao turned to face Chen Xiaolian, her face twisted.

Chen Xiaolian’s heart sank and he hobbled over.

“She... does not look good!” Qiao Qiao nervously held onto Nicole.

Chen Xiaolian knelt down on the ground and extended his hand to check Nicole’s breath.

Nicole’s situation was indeed worrisome.

Her breathing was growing weaker, her rate of inhalation exceeding her rate of exhalation.

Additionally... her body was beginning to cool down!

Her body was cooling down at a rapid pace! It was as though her body was quickly turning to a cold piece of stone!

“Her pupils are dilating!” Qiao Qiao pulled open Nicole’s eyelids and said. Even though she and Nicole do not see eye to eye, they were still comrade-in-arms. Observing Nicole’s current condition made her worried.

“Her pulse is also...” Chen Xiaolian pinched Nicole’s wrist.

Her pulse had disappeared!

“Healing Beast Blood! Healing Beast Blood!”

Qiao Qiao looked at Chen Xiaolian in panic.

Chen Xiaolian’s face was pale. He turned to Qiao Qiao and spoke in a low tone of voice. “I... don’t have anymore!”

Indeed, no more!

Chen Xiaolian, Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo... all three of them were Irregularities!

Irregularities do not have Exchange System! They could not purchase

out equipment from the Exchange System at any given moment nor could they purchase medicinal substances like the Healing Beast Blood!

They did prepare some healing medicinal substances as reserve when the instance dungeon began, however, those were purchased through the humanoid discount card, Xia Xiaolei.

Presently though... after such a lengthy battle, everyone's reserve items have been exhausted!

Chen Xiaolian had none on him! The same held true for Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo!

Nicole's pulse...

Completely stopped!

...

Tears flowed out from Qiao Qiao's eyes.

She hugged Nicole's body tightly. "Hey! You are not really going to die, are you? Wake up! Wake up! You are a Floating Angel! You are such a prideful person! Didn't you like arguing with me? Wake up, woman!"

Chen Xiaolian's face was grim as he silently sat by their side.

Soo Soo dragged Roddy over and Chen Xiaolian silently got up to check his condition. After walking over and determining that Roddy was fine but simply unconscious, he said nothing. He brought Roddy over and placed him beside Nicole.

"We... lost her."

Chen Xiaolian grabbed Qiao Qiao's wrist to stop her from shaking Nicole's body.

"..." Qiao Qiao raised her head and looked at Chen Xiaolian. "I... I..."

She suddenly threw herself onto Nicole's body. "I am sorry! I am sorry, Nicole! I am so sorry! I should not have argued with you! You did so many things for us, so many... I am sorry!"

[System prompt: Your guild member Nicole has died].

[System prompt: Due to the death of the Hunt Prolonging Card's owner, the countdown timer has stopped].

[System prompt: Teleportation will begin in ten seconds. Ten, nine, eight, seven... three, two, one!]

Chen Xiaolian, Soo Soo, Qiao Qiao, Roddy... their figures disappeared from the spot...

...

Nagase Komi was kneeling on the ground as she gazed upon the skies... the distant explosion back then was so terrifying, it felt as though the resulting burst of light had enveloped the entirety of Tokyo...

She watched as the cloud of light dissipated and the skies turned calm...

Nagase Komi suddenly felt an intense feeling of dread blooming within her heart. It was as though she had stepped into nothingness and a sense of emptiness filled her heart.

It was as though a certain presence had... disappeared?

[System prompt: Due to the death of the Hunt Prolonging Card's owner, the countdown timer has stopped].

"Dead? He is dead?" Nagase Komi raised her head up high and looked at the skies in stupor.

The bald man... he said he would protect me...

Dead?

Nagase Komi was lost in thought as she looked at the skies. She did not even realize that a wet feeling was coming from her eyes.

That fellow who said... he detested matters of being abandoned the most.

That fellow who said... he will protect me...

That powerful fellow who forced the Guild Leader to run away miserably...

Just like that... he... died?

[Countdown: Three... two... one...]

A clump of light enveloped Nagase Komi's body.

The bald girl did not notice... her feet... without making any noise whatsoever...

An object the size of a speck of sand fell down...

That drop of silvery liquid metal was like a pearl made of water and it moved toward Nagase Komi's shoes, flowing onto it.

It then fused together with the metal ring of her shoelace!

...

Tokyo, Ginza.

It was bustling with people and cars went by in droves.

Female students wearing short skirts, young delinquents with dyed hair and white collared workers wearing business attire and briefcase...

The sun was above sending its light down upon this bustling metropolis.

On a giant screen, there was an advertisement where a celebrity was endorsing a perfume...

Chen Xiaolian held onto Roddy while Qiao Qiao held onto Soo Soo. They stood by the street, motionless.

This place should be the exit location for their teleportation. They waited there for at least five minutes.

However, Nicole did not appear!

Nicole was not teleported out!

Nicole... was truly dead.

...

On the ground floor of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Chen Xiaolian and his group caught sight of the two brothers, Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Xia Xiaolei.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai's body were bandaged with Bei Tai suffering the most. Lun Tai limped forward with a crutch while Bei Tai was helped forward by Xia Xiaolei as he could no longer move.

They came together and Lun Tai looked at Chen Xiaolian and his group of four... he looked around and frowned as he turned toward Chen Xiaolian.

It appeared he realized that there was one less person.

Chen Xiaolian looked into Lun Tai's eyes and lightly shook his head.

...

In a remote alley within a certain corner of Tokyo,.

A bald headed girl appeared at a corner, scaring away a cat that was rummaging a trashcan.

The bald girl stood inside the alley and observed the exit of the alley from her location. There, the people were bustling about and cars drove by in numbers, creating a lively atmosphere.

The bald girl absent-mindedly watched the world beyond the alley. Then, she suddenly turned her body and walked inside, toward the darker area of the alley. Soon, her figure disappeared into the darkness of the quiet alley.

...

Chapter 156: That Is How It Is

Chen Xiaolian walked into a convenience store located within a small gas station. He casually picked up a bottle of mineral water and looked outside the window as he paid for it.

Takeuchi Mikiko was wearing her work uniform, sporting a lovable ponytail, which bounced up and down as she ran about. As she was moving about, she hummed a Japanese song that Chen Xiaolian did not recognize.

The sunlight spilled down and onto the glass; it was as though a layer of golden light was enveloping Takeuchi Mikiko's body, creating a warm and comfortable feeling.

A relaxed expression appeared within Chen Xiaolian's eyes and he gently exhaled. He walked out of the convenience store, unscrewed the bottle of water and took a gulp before leaving the gas station.

While moving through an intersection, he saw a biker gang member standing by a motorbike. With just a glimpse, Chen Xiaolian was able to recognize the man with the little moustache. The man was currently being surrounded by two police officers who were in the process of severely reprimanding him.

At present, the fellow no longer possessed the madness he showed back in the instance dungeon, where he used Molotov cocktails to set fire to other people's houses. Instead, he exhibited a dog like wretched attitude, gingerly bowing his head.

Chen Xiaolian gave a soft sigh and left.

...

On their return trip from Japan, Roddy did not join them.

After waking up to the news that Nicole had died, he did not utter a single word for an entire evening.

When morning came, he informed Chen Xiaolian that he wanted to be alone for a few days.

“She is an Awakened. After dying, she must have been refreshed. I... I want to find her and look at her from afar.”

Where to find, what method of searching, how to find...

Chen Xiaolian did not ask those questions. Roddy will have his own methods. Since he knew Nicole's name, perhaps Roddy might end up doing something stupid – however, was there any youngsters who had never committed stupid acts?

Chen Xiaolian merely reminded Roddy to leave his mobile phone on at all times so that they could contact him.

“The next time we receive a notification for an instance dungeon, you need to come back and meet up with us.”

This was the only requirement Chen Xiaolian had asked from Roddy.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai too, did not return together with them.

Their reasoning was simple: After having gone through such a difficult instance dungeon, the both of them needed a vacation.

Within this path of madness and slaughter, where one had to struggle to hang on to dear life... every time they went through an instance dungeon, they will need to release the pent up stress within their hearts.

Thus, the both of them left the group and went on a vacation.

“Generally speaking, the system will not issue out an instance dungeon to a guild that had just participated in an instance dungeon. This is the norm,” Lun Tai told Chen Xiaolian as he was leaving. “I will be keeping in touch.”

As for their holiday destination, it was supposedly Las Vegas. The two brothers intended to use wine, beauties and gambling to numb their souls.

...

Takeuchi Mikiko arrived at her house and saw an envelope resting above the carpet leading to her house.

Opening the envelope, she found that it contained several thousand US dollar bills!

The girl looked at it in surprise for a long time before uttering out a sharp scream of surprise and elation.

She ran into the house, picked up the phone and made a call.

“Sister! Did you send the money over? Eh? What... no? Then... where are you now? On the way to the airport? You have to go fly again? I will let you in on this, I finally have money! Ah? I don’t know. I really do not know, maybe mother sent it? I... let’s not talk about that anymore. I still have class in the afternoon! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! Next time you come back, remember to return to eat something. Recently, I have learnt how to cook many delicious dishes. Your exchange training should be ending soon, right? When can you return to work on domestic flights?”

...

At the same time, Chen Xiaolian was walking toward the departure lounge of an airport.

Qiao Qiao, Soo Soo and Xia Xiaolei were already waiting for him inside the departure lounge. He had earlier gone into the washroom to wash his hands.

Looking at his reflection in the mirror, he used water to comb his hair. Then, he squeezed out a smile as he faced the clear and fair face in the mirror.

Truth be told, Chen Xiaolian and the others were feeling disheartened.

He was not Roddy. However, Nicole’s death had brought a feeling of shock to Chen Xiaolian.

In his third instance dungeon, he faced his first... death of a guild member.

Even though she was only a temporary guild member...

Perhaps... perhaps someday, in some instance dungeon, more of his guild members will die?

This was originally a game that would continue on forever, with no end point or ending.

As long as he stayed alive, he would continue to be thrown into the instance dungeons to struggle for survival.

Until... the day of his death.

"That day, might be far away, or perhaps it might be much closer," Chen Xiaolian smiled out bitterly.

If... the one to die is Qiao Qiao. Or Roddy, or Soo Soo...

How would I feel?

If... I am the one to die. How would they feel?

An agitating thought was floating within his mind.

If this goes on, then, what are we fighting for?

What kind of result can we hope to achieve?

No matter how hard we try, we can ultimately only live through some instance dungeons, extending our lifespan by a slight margin!

This is a road with no hope in sight!

Even if we are to struggle, even if we are to become an expert like Nicole, could we escape death?

We cannot!

We will still have to participate in the instance dungeons.

Since that is the case...

Then, what is the point in trying?

What significance is there?

Bang!

Chen Xiaolian's fist slammed onto the mirror!

Through the reflection of the cracked mirror, Chen Xiaolian noticed that his expression had turned distorted.

When he walked out from the washroom, he had his head lowered and he moved quickly.

Chen Xiaolian failed to notice a team of flight attendants in uniform pulling their trolleys go by him. They walked in a composed manner, approaching from the side before walking past his back. One of them wore sky-blue leg stockings and was holding onto a mobile phone. A happy smile was etched on her face.

“Mikiko, I know... this is the last exchange training flight. Once I return from this flight, I will have collected enough money!”

After hanging up, the flight attendant inadvertently turned around and saw the back of a youngster who was walking far away.

His figure appeared quite lean.

It was clearly a stranger, but she could not help but glance at him again.

Hmm... that... feels strange...

...

A few hours later, the plane landed in the airport.

Along the way, none of them spoke a single word.

Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo went back home.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he led Xia Xiaolei back to his own residence.

Xia Xiaolei had made the decision to leave the village and stay with Chen Xiaolian's group in the future.

Chen Xiaolian brought Xia Xiaolei back to his own residence. Opening the door to the guest room, he pointed inside. “From now on, this room is yours.”

Xia Xiaolei walked inside and threw himself heavily onto the bed, flailed both his arms and legs about and sighed. “Too amazing! I get to live in such a big room by myself? Guild Leader, are you very rich? Your house is very big!”

Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips and smiled. Looking at Xia Xiaolei, he said. "Your body size is about the same as mine. For the time being, you can wear my clothes. When we have time, we will go get you some more. Hmm, now go take a bath and get some sleep. There is food in the refrigerator, do not hesitate to take what you need. From now on, treat this place like your own home."

Chen Xiaolian walked out of the room and into the living room. Then, he saw his mobile phone, which was lying on the couch, give a flash.

Picking it up, he saw that there was a message.

"I want to see you! Now! ASAP!" – Qiao Qiao.

Chen Xiaolian thought for a moment before moving to the balcony to call her back.

"Hello?"

"Are you home?" Qiao Qiao's voice sounded somewhat hoarse.

"En," Chen Xiaolian nodded lightly while watching the distant sun. "You..."

"I am at home. I just got Soo Soo to settle down. She is now sleeping," Qiao Qiao became silent for a while. Next, she spoke with a hint of firmness. "Let us meet up."

"Now?" Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly. "Didn't we just separate?"

"Right now!" Qiao Qiao's voice was extremely firm.

"... .." Listening to Qiao Qiao's voice, Chen Xiaolian felt something strange with her tone. "All right! State the place."

"Do you still remember the hotel where we met before?"

Chen Xiaolian laughed out. "The hotel where you took out a dagger to threaten me, where you said: If I were to disturb Soo Soo again, you will cripple me. That hotel?"

"... that hotel," Qiao Qiao took a deep breath. "I am heading out now. See you later."

...

One hour later.

Within the hotel's lobby, Qiao Qiao watched as Chen Xiaolian walked inside. She bit her lips and moved forward. Holding Chen Xiaolian's hand, the two of them walked into the elevator.

During the entire process, the two of them did not say anything. Their eyes did not even make contact.

Qiao Qiao had her head lowered.

Chen Xiaolian could feel that Qiao Qiao's hand was slightly trembling.

She had changed her clothes and her hair seemed somewhat wet. It seemed she had taken a bath back when she was at home.

She wore a short skirt, revealing her slender legs and the smooth skin of a young lady; giving her an attractive image.

Chen Xiaolian quietly averted his gaze away.

Having reached the top floor of the hotel, Qiao Qiao produced a card to open up the door to a room and the two of them entered.

Chen Xiaolian turned around. "Are you..."

Qiao Qiao suddenly flew into Chen Xiaolian's arms!

The force behind her was such that Chen Xiaolian was thrown onto the bed. Next, she kissed down heavily and her soft, fragrant lips made contact with Chen Xiaolian's.

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned before instinctively using his hands to embrace Qiao Qiao's waist.

Her short skirt and small waist T-shirt exposed her slim waist.

Chen Xiaolian's fingers caressed the girl's slim waist to his heart's content. Exhaling, he turned around, pinning Qiao Qiao down and pressing his lips down on hers. His tongue darted inside, forcing Qiao Qiao's teeth aside.

Soft, moist with a tint of sweet fragrance.

After the two of them kissed for who knew how long, they gasped for breath. Then, Qiao Qiao turned over, forcing herself on top of Chen Xiaolian's body. Chen Xiaolian's hands moved naturally into Qiao Qiao's short skirt and held onto her thigh. Then, he whispered. "You... what happened?"

Qiao Qiao shook her head, her eyes revealing traces of anxiety. However, she proceeded to untie the rope bundling her hair and leaned over, kissing Chen Xiaolian's cheek.

Black silky hair fell down, giving Qiao Qiao an extraordinarily delicate countenance.

Chen Xiaolian could somehow feel that there was a hint of something lurking behind Qiao Qiao's eyes... anxiety.

Qiao Qiao's lips kissed onto Chen Xiaolian's cheeks, nose, lips and neck.

Her actions were somewhat awkward, but Chen Xiaolian could sense the feelings of affection within her actions.

Her body trembled, but she only bit down on her lips. Next, she stretched out her hands and began unbuttoning Chen Xiaolian's shirt.

She straightened her back and took off her T-shirt.

The girl's delicate figure that was akin to a blooming flower was presented before Chen Xiaolian. Her arms hugged her chest, seemingly in an attempt to hide her pink coloured bra.

Chen Xiaolian's breathing had become shorter and he looked into Qiao Qiao's eyes. He asked in a hoarse tone of voice. "You... are you serious? Have you thought it through?"

Qiao Qiao leaned forward again; like a cat, she curled her body against Chen Xiaolian's.

Her voice was faint as she whispered. "I... this is my first time. The things I have seen in the movies... is only up to here. The rest is up to you."

After saying that, she closed her eyes and she dared not look at Chen Xiaolian anymore.

Chen Xiaolian...

This time, he showed no hesitation!

...

Chen Xiaolian gently held onto Qiao Qiao as he leaned over and slowly entered the girl's body. The tight and narrow feeling almost made him lost his soul.

At that moment, Qiao Qiao let out a groan of pain, bringing him back to reality.

Qiao Qiao opened her eyes as she tightly clutched onto Chen Xiaolian's arms, tears filling her eyes.

Then, she suddenly opened her mouth and bit down onto Chen Xiaolian's arm!

She bit down heavily!

Chen Xiaolian endured the pain. Next, he gently kissed Qiao Qiao's forehead and whispered into her ear. "Should I... stop?"

"No... continue," Qiao Qiao loosened her bite and looked into Chen Xiaolian's eyes. "I want you to look at me... keep looking at me."

...

The girl's soft voice began to rise within the room and eventually reached the climax. Then, it faded away. A smooth and slender leg slid down the side of the bed, but an arm reached out, grabbing it and bringing it back onto the bed.

Chen Xiaolian tightly embraced Qiao Qiao within his chest, her back plastered onto his chest. One hand held onto her waist while the other held onto the leg that was pulled back earlier, resting on her knee.

Although the situation had calmed down, the room seemed to be filled with a reddish atmosphere.

“Just now... we did not use...”

“It is my safe period,” Qiao Qiao shook her head and tilted it to lean onto Chen Xiaolian’s neck.

Chen Xiaolian could feel the girl trembling within his arms. In response to her light but irrepressible shivers, Chen Xiaolian tightened his embrace.

“Do not be afraid,” Chen Xiaolian used a low but firm voice to speak into Qiao Qiao’s ear.

“En,” Qiao Qiao turned around and leaned onto Chen Xiaolian’s chest. The two youngsters’ body nestled together.

“I am scared, I am very scared,” Qiao Qiao whispered. “If... the next time, if the one to die is me. If... the one to die is you. I dare not even think about all those. When I was bathing back at home, I saw myself on the mirror and I told myself: I must do this! I must do this now without putting it off. I want to take this opportunity while we are still alive to give myself to you, to a man I like.”

“... you will not die, I will not die either. We will not die,” Chen Xiaolian’s lips brushed past Qiao Qiao’s ears.

Qiao Qiao closed her eyes and spoke out in a low tone. “Xiaolian, these matters are not up to us to control. My only desire is... for you to die after me. Let me die before you, all right?”

“... ..”

“I am scared. If you die, then I will feel very lonely. After getting sucked into this world, in this lifetime, it is impossible for me to like anyone else but you. If you were to die first, then I will feel scared. I do not know how I am supposed to deal with the things that will happen after that by myself,” Qiao Qiao suddenly cried out. “Am I not selfish? That is why, I only hope that if we must die, let me die before you, all right?”

Her emotions were clearly unstable.

Chen Xiaolian was clear on this.

Qiao Qiao was feeling terrified. She was terrified of death and being alone... this pressure was something that needed release.

It was late.

The two youngsters were still awake as they lay in bed with Qiao Qiao lying within Chen Xiaolian's arms.

She began to narrate about the things they went through to complete the Bio-transformation Faction's quest.

"The research institute was like a huge labyrinth and was filled with a lot of soldiers. All of them had transformed into monsters. Advancing was very difficult. Thankfully, we had Nicole on our side. She was very powerful.

"We walked around inside the labyrinth, but was constantly attacked by the monsters. The number of monsters there were simply far too much. It was as though there was no limit to them.

"But then, we suddenly received the quest completion notification. Since that was the case, we discussed it through and decided to retreat. Lun Tai and the others felt that since one quest had been completed, the most important thing to do after that was to preserve our lives.

"However, before we could successfully retreat, everything changed.

"All the monsters seemingly disappeared and all of the underground research institute became empty."

Chen Xiaolian pondered it through. "Hmm, I understand. That should be because Tian Lie utilized the Hunt Prolonging Card. He forcibly stopped the refreshing process of the instance dungeon. Thus, the refreshing process was stuck in the middle with all the monsters gone, leaving only you people inside the instance dungeon."

"That may well be the case," Qiao Qiao sighed. "Since there were no more monsters, there was no longer any need to retreat. Although the labyrinth was complicated, we were still able to find out way through it. Then, in an unguarded area of the research institute, we found the research results of the Bio-transformation Faction. I think... if not for you

completing the quest, and if Tian Lie had not stopped the instance dungeon's refreshing process, we could never complete the quest so easily."

Hmph... it appears that Tian Lie had unwittingly helped us?

Chen Xiaolian secretly sneered.

Next, Qiao Qiao informed Chen Xiaolian about two matters.

"The Bio-transformation Faction's research results, the Power Propagation Serum is originally given to us according to the number of people we have. However, Nicole said that she had promised that she will not take any reward from this instance dungeon. Thus, she decided to give the one that she received to Roddy."

After Qiao Qiao said that, Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

Give it to... Roddy?

He looked at Qiao Qiao. "She... Roddy..."

"I do not know," Qiao Qiao shook her head.

Qiao Qiao pulled something out from the system.

Inside was a metal syringe containing aquamarine coloured substance.

"She gave me this item so that I could give it to Roddy," Qiao Qiao hesitated. "However, after Roddy woke up, I dared not tell him about these. I feared that he would not be able to accept it."

Chen Xiaolian sighed. "You did the right thing. If you had told him about this back then, he would have lost it. Roddy's emotions are very unstable now."

He looked at the syringe and said. "Keep it first. Wait for Roddy to return before giving it to him."

"The second matter," Qiao Qiao bit down hard on her lips.

Tears trickled down her eyes.

Qiao Qiao said in a whisper. "In the instance dungeon... she helped me block an attack!"

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

He did not know that something like that happened.

“She helped me block an attack,” Qiao Qiao cried softly. “She got hurt as a result and told me that even though we did not see eye to eye, we are still comrade-in-arms. Comrade-in-arms should support each other in the midst of battle. I... I truly feel regretful... I regret arguing with her. I felt that I was a bad and terrible person. Back then... back then, she got hurt, and I gave the last of my reserve healing substance to her.

“If... if I had a healing substance back when she was dying, maybe she would not have died.”

Chen Xiaolian was silent. All he did was to hug Qiao Qiao firmly.

...

At daybreak, Chen Xiaolian sat up on the bed and saw Qiao Qiao standing beside the room's window.

Sunlight poured in from beyond the coffee coloured glass.

Qiao Qiao was not wearing any clothes and the girl's soft, delicate body was exposed before Chen Xiaolian's eyes.

Delicate and slender legs, round and raised hips, slim waist and an ample bosom...

Qiao Qiao turned around and looked at Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian then quickly got up, going over with a piece of blanket and using it to wrap over her body. Lowering his head, he kissed Qiao Qiao's neck. “You are really bold. Why aren't you wearing your clothes? Are you not fearful of exposing it all in front of me?”

“There is only you here,” Qiao Qiao shook her head, the expression on her face was calm. “You are my man, my body is yours. Is there anything wrong with letting you see it?”

“We...”

“Since yesterday night, until the day I die, I am your woman and you are my man,” Qiao Qiao gently said. “That is how it is.”

The girl raised her head and looked into Chen Xiaolian's eyes. Her expression was soft, yet there was also firmness within them!

After the night of feverish passion, the two of them appeared to have cleared off the pressure and fear lingering within their hearts. Qiao Qiao's emotions appeared to have settled down.

She took Chen Xiaolian's hand and softly pressed it onto the upper left side of her chest where her heart was.

Qiao Qiao whispered. "That is how it is! Xiaolian, until the day I die, the period of time before that happens, I am your woman!"

...

—

[Author's notes: Err, I wrote it carefully. Checking it in detail, this level should not be too much, right...

[Hmm, finally went down on Qiao Qiao. Let us celebrate the end of Xiaolian's cn life~~~

[PS: About Tian Lie's death, why did the system say that Tian Lie had died and why there is a drop of liquid metal... to those readers who are curious about it, that is not a bug. It is a set up (story set up). I cannot explain too much. Everyone, please slowly read on, you will find out ~~~

[I beseech the fellow readers to be patient. There must be some intentional enticement, suspense and set-ups, right?

[If people were to come out and scold me every time I write something of suspense, forcing me to explain it...

[Then, it would end up being too boring, right?

[Ok?]

Chapter 157: Unopened Path

The two youngsters who have been tempered by life in their early years remained within the room for the whole day.

Chen Xiaolian was incomparably infatuated with Qiao Qiao's body. The body of the young girl was extremely durable, yet it maintained an extreme sense of softness. Perhaps it was due to the fact that she practised martial arts, her body's flexibility was extremely shocking.

The two youngsters showed no hesitation and squeezed out all their strength in their attempt to release their stress.

It was not until the sky had darkened did the two of them reluctantly left the hotel.

"I have to go home."

Standing before the hotel entrance, Qiao Qiao embraced Chen Xiaolian, both her hands hugging his neck. Her eyes were dim and she was clearly sad. However, she said in a low voice. "I have gone out for one day and night. Soo Soo must be feeling anxious."

"En," Chen Xiaolian breathed in the scent of Qiao Qiao's hair and gave a bittersweet smile. "That Xia Xiaolei is probably waiting for my return to the point of crying. Last night, I just left after leaving him a note."

As the two passionate youngsters embraced each other, a considerable number of people in the surrounding hotel looked at them.

No small number of them were looking at Qiao Qiao. With her youthful body, long silky black hair and exposed slender legs, the number of men whose eyes were attracted toward her was considerable. These men then looked at Chen Xiaolian with expressions of envy.

"Let us meet up again tomorrow," Chen Xiaolian pinched Qiao Qiao's nose. "Besides, we have nothing going on the next few days."

"... school is starting soon," Qiao Qiao suddenly said in a low tone.

Those words appeared so suddenly, carrying with it a sense of absurdity.

The both of them glanced at one another and revealed a smile at the same time.

School?

The everyday life of normal people... was there any point in continuing them?

In merely a few days' time, those normal days have become something distant...

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao and whispered. "When you come out tomorrow, do not wear short skirt anymore. We are still in winter."

They have enhanced their physical attributes up to [B] Class. Although they were still a long distance away from the level of Superman, they were now far above average. At the very least, their resistance toward cold would surpass even those from Siberia.

Within the coldness of winter, Qiao Qiao was able to get by wearing short skirt.

"We... do we still have to go to school?" Qiao Qiao knitted her eyebrows.

"... we will discuss about this later on," Chen Xiaolian had never considered that issue as well. "I personally do not care about it since I live alone. But you... how do you plan on explaining things to your father?"

Qiao Qiao did not say anything.

"Maybe... the purpose in us fighting so desperately is to allow us to continue living within this world. If we truly forsake our personal lives, then what difference is there between us and those Players? After all, we are the 'native residents' of this world."

"Then, I will see you tomorrow."

"En, see you tomorrow," Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. "Tomorrow, I want to contact Lun Tai, Bei Tai and Roddy for a bit. The system had given out the reward for the Japanese instance dungeon. It would be best if we discuss how to distribute the reward."

The two youngsters parted with reluctance. Chen Xiaolian did not let

Qiao Qiao accompany him and instead went back home alone.

After arriving at his home, he opened the door and walked in to see Xia Xiaolei sitting inside the living room.

The fellow appeared to be in a miserable state.

Within his hand was a block of instant noodles, which he chewed dry. As Chen Xiaolian entered, Xia Xiaolei ripped open a pack of seasoning and sprinkled it on the surface of the instant noodle as he bit onto it.

“You are just too sad,” Chen Xiaolian could not help but laugh. “If I did not return, will you end up starving to death? Can’t you cook?”

Xia Xiaolei scratched his head and smiled in embarrassment. “That... I do not know how to use the items inside the kitchen.”

The electrical appliances within Chen Xiaolian’s kitchen were extensive. He was not someone lacking in terms of money and his motto in life was that the money he earned should go toward making his life easy and happy.

All the latest electrical appliances could be found inside the kitchen. The latest exhaust hood, oven, dishwasher, sterilizing cabinet...

At any rate, all the necessary appliances were there.

Unfortunately for Xia Xiaolei who came from the mountain village, even the act of opening the TV took him a long time last night as he searched high and low for the switch. When faced with the task of utilizing the appliances within the kitchen, all he could do was look around in despair.

...

Qiao Qiao returned home. However, before she could return to her own room, Soo Soo walked forward with a pouting expression.

“You... have not revert to your first personality?” Qiao Qiao looked at her little sister.

It was not that she did not like Soo Soo’s second personality. She simply felt that Soo Soo’s second personality was too cold.

“You have been out for one whole day and night,” Soo Soo moved closer and her little nose proceeded to sniff about. Then, the little girl puffed up her face into a bun like shape. “Your body have his scent! Were you together with him yesterday night?”

Qiao Qiao blushed and she stared at Soo Soo. “Little kids should not be asking so much!”

“So, you admit it,” Soo Soo’s expression turned complicated. Then, she snorted and pinched the corners of her skirt before sitting down beside Qiao Qiao. “Unnie, are you going to compete against me for Xiaolian oppa?”

“... ..” A smile burst out on Qiao Qiao’s face. “What nonsense are you talking about?”

“I have said it before. Let Xiaolian oppa wait a few years for me to grow up a little, then I will become his girlfriend!” Soo Soo pursed her mouth. “Now you have snatched him away, what should I do?”

The little girl seemed distressed. She turned around to look at her own small body reflected through the mirror. “It would be great if I can immediately grow up! Then, unnie will definitely not be able to compete with me!”

“Hey!”

“I remember that my mother’s appearance is very beautiful! Once I grow big, I will definitely inherit my mother’s beauty. Unnie, you will definitely lose out to me.”

Qiao Qiao angrily slapped Soo Soo’s buttocks before pulling her over, embracing her in a hug. “Stop talking nonsense. Tonight I will hold you and we will sleep together, all right? After sleeping, tomorrow you will return back to your first personality.”

“Unnie, do you not like me? Do you prefer the weak and useless little thing instead of me?” Soo Soo raised her head and looked at Qiao Qiao with an indiscernible expression. “If... the time I appear grow longer and longer, will you be disappointed?”

“... do not be stupid,” Qiao Qiao embraced Soo Soo. “No matter what happens, you are my dearest little sister.”

After saying that, Qiao Qiao put Soo Soo down and entered the washroom to wash up.

Soo Soo however, continued to stand before the mirror. Her faced revealed distress as she assessed herself.

“How troublesome, there are two problems now. First, unnie also likes Xiaolian oppa. She had already snatched Xiaolian oppa away. Now what? And... the other me, that weak little thing simply do not understand the crisis we are in! I cannot keep staying out here as well...”

...

The next day was a weekend and the weather appeared quite agreeable. Waking up early in the morning, Chen Xiaolian made breakfast and Xia Xiaolei was able to stop undergoing the distressful experience of eating dry instant noodles.

Later on in the morning, Chen Xiaolian contacted Qiao Qiao and made arrangements to meet up.

Since there were other people present, Chen Xiaolian did not show any intimate reaction toward Qiao Qiao. Both of them appear restrained as they sat side by side.

“Now we will begin our discussion,” Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao before looking at Xia Xiaolei.

“You are the Guild Leader. Whatever you say goes, I have no opinion,” Xia Xiaolei spoke out honestly and nodded his head.

“Still, we have to discuss things through,” Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment. “The rewards for the instance dungeon have been issued. We must now distribute it rationally so that our guild’s strength can be increased. In addition... about our guild’s future development. We must make due preparations for it.”

They were currently within a high-class hall for private tea ceremonies.

The private room was quiet as even the waiters had been sent out under Qiao Qiao's command.

It had to be mentioned, Qiao Qiao's family possessed a portion of shares for this hall for private tea ceremonies.

"First, let us contact Lun Tai and Bei Tai."

...

They contacted Lun Tai and Bei Tai using the computer's video call function.

The two brothers were clearly indulging themselves a tad bit too much.

Through the monitor, they could clearly tell that the two brothers were in one of Las Vegas' super deluxe suite.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai appeared slightly exhausted. That was especially true for Bei Tai whose face was pale with a tint of green. It was clear that this fellow have been drinking too much. Even when he was standing before the monitor, he was still holding onto a bottle of wine.

Upon the surface of the sofa behind the two brothers were numerous layers of clothing.

Err... those were mostly women's clothing... underwear, stockings and high heels. There were even a few bunny costumes...

When they first clicked open the video, Chen Xiaolian watched as a nude woman with perky breasts and raised buttocks walked past the two brothers from behind.

Exasperatingly, Lun Tai had leaned over and delivered a slap onto the female's ass.

"Hey! Watch it!" Chen Xiaolian said with dissatisfaction.

He covered Soo Soo's eyes and frowned. "I will give you one minute. Get those who are unrelated to leave the room!"

Lun Tai laughed and did not appear to show regard for Chen Xiaolian's dissatisfaction. "Guild Leader, do not be so old-fashioned. After

experiencing such a cruel battle, we will be in serious need of release. Eh? Your appearance seemed much better compared to the time when we separated. How did you get rid of the stress?”

Lun Tai even purposely glanced toward Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao snorted, but did not say anything.

Lun Tai produced a thick stack of US dollar bills and females started appearing from every corner of the room. There were Caucasian females, black females, Asian females, golden haired females, red haired females, black haired females...

Just by looking at these females, one could deduce that they hold a special occupation. All of them wore little and had no qualms about being exposed in front of the monitor. All of them had smoking hot bodies, with ample bosom and ripe buttocks.

Each of the women took a stack of US dollar bills from Bei Tai and gave him a farewell kiss. Some of them appeared bold and unconstrained as they sent flying kisses toward the monitor.

Qiao Qiao's face was warped as she watched.

A few minutes later, the room was cleared. Then, the two brothers sat in front of the camera. Lun Tai took a deep breath and his countenance turned serious. “All right, down to business.”

“Are there no other people inside the room?”

“I have double checked it. It is absolutely safe,” Lun Tai smiled.

Chen Xiaolian had faith in Lun Tai's abilities. Unlike the muddle-headed Bei Tai, Lun Tai's way of working was certainly up to standard.

“The reason I contacted you two is because there is something that we need to discuss. The first thing is about the matters regarding distribution. The rewards for the Japan instance dungeon had already been issued.”

“I know,” Lun Tai nodded his head.

The reward by the system was divided into two parts.

The first part was the number of points earned by each guild member.

This part of the reward would be issued out directly to each guild member's personal system. Thus, there was no need for Chen Xiaolian to distribute those.

In the Japan instance dungeon, everyone had to undergo a bitter battle. Thus, the amount of harvest they acquired was not small.

By assessing their performance in the three phases of the Japan instance dungeon, the points issued out by the instance dungeon were:

Lun Tai and Bei Tai earned 1,500 points each. In the first and second stage, the two brothers formed the guild's main battle strength. Back when they had started up the tank to rampage through the streets, Bei Tai had managed to earn a considerable number of points.

Qiao Qiao: 600 points.

Soo Soo: 300 points.

Xia Xiaolei: 400 points.

The three of them had relatively minor performance within the first two phase of the instance dungeon. However, in the third phase, in order to seize the research results of the Bio-transformation Faction, they too had to do battle. However, they were simply helping to fetch the soya sauce.
[1]

That was especially true for Soo Soo. Due to Qiao Qiao being overprotective, she had no opportunity to show off her blazing Phoenix skill.

As for Chen Xiaolian, his reward points was... 3,300 points!

This amount of points was truly significant. Chen Xiaolian speculated that the reason why he could acquire so much more points compared to Lun Tai and Bei Tai was because he had been the one to finish off the invisible giant monster back on the highway. Additionally, he had also used the beam rifle to severely damage the giant toad when he was in the research institute.

Those two battle contributions brought him a huge amount of harvest.

Naturally, since they were not in contact with Roddy, they were unable to find out how many points Roddy acquired.

However, even if they were to exclude points from the calculations, Roddy's harvest was the biggest.

An [A+] class Mech!

Additionally, there were also the 6 Power Propagation Serums from the Bio-transformation Faction. Those had already been distributed.

After utilizing this medicinal substance from the Bio-transformation Faction, the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai chose the same thing: To enhance their Physique.

Chen Xiaolian heard that Soo Soo and Xia Xiaolei had chosen to enhance their Agility.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he chose to enhance his Physique, which will increase his strength and attack power.

The last one belonged to Roddy, so no one touched it. It was still being held by Chen Xiaolian's side.

"We also have some additional reward that the system had issued directly to the Guild Leader, that is me," Chen Xiaolian looked at them.

Back in the instance dungeon, they had acquired a [B] class Attack Exemption Card.

Then, after the instance dungeon came to an end, the system issued out some more rewards to Chen Xiaolian.

The first item: [B+] class Storage Watch, a storage equipment. After checking, Chen Xiaolian found that the space within this storage equipment was very good. It has the size of approximately 4 cargo containers combined. The restriction imposed was that it could not store any life forms; neither living beings nor plants were allowed in it.

The second item: A Thunderstorm Tank!

The Thunderstorm Tank was a [B] class technological equipment.

The power that this equipment possessed was something that Chen Xiaolian had personally witnessed back in the Tokyo instance dungeon. One blast from its artillery could turn a normal tank into scrap metal.

Although it ended up being trampled upon before a Floating Angel, this Thunderstorm Tank still held an absolute position of authority when faced against ordinary weapons.

“At least we now have a powerful means of ground-based transportation. In addition, its firepower is very good,” Chen Xiaolian said. “Besides the driver and gunner, the Thunderstorm Tank can also accommodate ten other people. In total, twelve people can fit inside it.”

The third reward item was something of a surprise.

“Comprehensive Repair Card, [A] class,” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows. “It could repair any damage taken by any mechanical equipment below [S] class. I feel that this item is very suitable for Roddy’s Mech. Once a mechanical equipment is damaged, it could be repaired at any given moment.

“However, there is a drawback to this item. When it is being used, it will automatically transform into a maintenance warehouse. During the repairing process, the item cannot be summoned back. If this item was used in the middle of an intense battle, we will not be able to take it with us if we want to run away. It would be akin to a fixed target for enemies to attack. It is only after the repairing process is complete will we be able to summon it back.

“According to the prompt by the system, the higher the class of the equipment sent for repairs, or if the severity of damage taken by the equipment is high, then the time taken for the repairing process would become longer.”

After discussing it a bit more, they all agreed that this item was an additional reward by the system to reward Roddy for acquiring the [A+] class Mech!

Three people went into the Mechanical Faction area, Chen Xiaolian, Roddy and Nagase Komi. Rationally speaking, it was unlikely that only Roddy would get something out of the instance dungeon – the six people who entered the Bio-transformation Faction area acquired six medicinal substances!

In the Mechanical Faction area, Roddy was the only one to acquire the Mech.

Naturally, this was something unfair when considering the system's standards. However, it was impossible to give three people the Mechs.

Thus, this [A] class Comprehensive Repair Card must be an additional reward by the system.

All three additional rewards were of the technological type. This was probably due to the fact that Tokyo instance dungeon was a technological instance dungeon.

Soon, they all came to an agreement.

As the guild's vehicle, the Thunderstorm Tank will have Lun Tai and Roddy as its designated drivers and Bei Tai as its gunner.

The Guild Leader, Chen Xiaolian, will wear the Storage Watch and he will be in charge of the supplies for the guild.

As for the Comprehensive Repair Card, that too would now be held by Chen Xiaolian... however, it would appear that only Roddy's Mech would be able to use that item.

"There is one other matter, everyone's points," Chen Xiaolian slowly said. "I understand that there are rules. Not even the Guild Leader would interfere much in the guild members' path of development. However, our guild is different from others. We have Xia Xiaolei. With his skill, he makes the perfect logistics personnel. You all should have already known about it, he has the ability to get discounts when making purchases from the Exchange System.

"What I mean to say is... it would be best for everyone to purchase items from the Exchange System through Xia Xiaolei.

“First, doing so will help save up on points.

“Second, after looking it up a little, I made a deduction. Xia Xiaolei’s skill would likely depend on the number of usage and amount involved in order to level up. In other words, there is a possibility that the more he uses his skill, the more points he will be able to save up through his discounting skill. That could possibly be the way to level up his skill. When that happens, the amount of discount may become even higher. That is why...”

“I understand,” Lun Tai quickly made a proper decision. “I will discuss it through with Bei Tai for a bit. Then, we will decide on the items we want to purchase through the Exchange System using points and list them down before sending it over to you the Guild Leader to coordinate the purchase. I feel that having someone like Xia Xiaolei as our guild member is a very good thing. We can make the proper coordination when making purchases.”

“It is great that you understand,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “You will have to create a list of the things you want to purchase and the things that needed to be enhanced to give to me. After that, we will discuss it through. Then, Xia Xiaolei will be the one to purchase the items. As for the necessary points, everyone can just send it to Xia Xiaolei.”

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai did not object to his suggestion.

Next, Chen Xiaolian forwarded another request to the two brothers. “You two should have released enough stress for the past two days, right? Vacation is not limitless. If you are done enjoying things, then come back quickly. We still have some other matters that need to be done.”

“Other matters? Such as?”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes flickered and he said. “After returning from Zero City, I have had this thought in mind. As a guild, we will need our own base of operations! Before heading into the instance dungeon to do battle, we will need a place where we could make the necessary preparations, be it in the form of training or preparation of equipment. We need our own

base of operations! A place where we can hoard weapons, equipment, resources and various others.

“Naturally, it would be impossible for us to rival Zero City in terms of size. At the very least, we will still require a place that could be used for those aspects.

“For example, if certain equipment becomes damaged, we will need a place to repair them. Simply using the Exchange System for it would be a waste of points. Even if the base only allows us to save up a little on points, that would still be worth it.

“Additionally, we will also require some means of transport. It would be best if we could find some vehicles to modify. That way, if we ever encounter the same situation as the Tokyo instance dungeon, we will have a sufficient amount of preparations for it.”

“I agree, our own base of operations is absolutely necessary,” Lun Tai nodded his head. “Weapons, equipment, firearms and others of the like are not something we can always carry with us at all times. For weapons modification, Bei Tai can help out.”

“Then it is decided, this will be our biggest goal during this intermission period between instance dungeons. So...”

“Understood! We will end our vacation quickly and return,” Lun Tai smiled. “How about I reserve a ticket for tomorrow morning’s flights?”

“There is no need to be so hasty. The establishment of the base and the initial stages of the corresponding work are not something you guys can help out with. Qiao Qiao will think of a way and find a suitable spot. After that... you can still have a few more days of vacation. However... three days... three days! After three days, please tie things up and return.”

“No problem!” Lun Tai smiled and nodded his head.

Their video conference ended.

After turning off the monitor, Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao. “The location for the base...”

“Just leave it to me,” Qiao Qiao smiled. “My father has some lands. If I recall correctly, there is an industrial estate located in a coastal city. That place is very remote and barren with a large abandoned factory. The piece of land is one of my father’s failed investment projects. He is probably unhappy that there is no way to use it. I can ask from him...”

Chen Xiaolian thought about it. “I think the location is quite appropriate, however...”

“Money is not a problem,” Qiao Qiao shrugged her shoulders. “If we are dead, having more money is useless.”

“Very well, I will leave this matter in your hands,” Chen Xiaolian pondered and said. “I want to make a trip.”

“Hmm?”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Qiao and sighed. “Do you remember what I said before? I feel that there is a need for me to go to Hangzhou City and meet up with Han Bi...”

...

—

1 ‘Fetch the soya sauce’ means making minor contributions. This can be easily understood when considering a chef who is cooking food while the assistant only helps to fetch the soya sauce.

Chapter 158: Small D

Hangzhou Railway Station. Chen Xiaolian walked out of the railway station and stood outside. The weather was not looking good and a light drizzle was falling down amid the gloomy atmosphere.

Chen Xiaolian knew that Han Bi went to a middle school within Hangzhou City and his address was located at the West Lake area.

The school was not that hard to find. He simply stopped a cab and got it to bring him over to the school. After arriving, he saw that the gate of the school was closed. Chen Xiaolian frowned.

There were still a few more days before school reopens. Thus, the number of students within the school was scarce.

Chen Xiaolian's age allowed him to walk into the school undeterred. The guard at the gate simply assumed him to be a student of the school.

He walked around the sports field for a while and watched a group of boys playing football despite the rain. One after another, they sloshed onto the ground, their bodies resembling mudskippers. Yet, none of them became tired.

Without holding onto an umbrella, Chen Xiaolian stood at the sports field for a moment to watch them.

Canopies were constructed above the field stands where some students were watching the game. Some pleasant looking girls were standing on the stands and cheering them onward. The cheering action from those girls prompted the boys in the field to play harder.

Chen Xiaolian walked until he reached the shelter provided by the canopy and he continued to observe the football game for a little longer – the game between these high school students contained no technical contents and were more of a competition between their physical prowess. They were simply slamming into each other within the muddy sports field, turning the game of football into rugby.

The referee was clearly ignoring the situation despite the overt actions

shown by both sides.

As for the girls under the canopy, they were clearly from this school. From their shouts of cheerleading, Chen Xiaolian was soon able to determine which team was the home team.

After a moment, he sat down beside a polite looking female student with chubby cheeks.

When the game began to slow down, Chen Xiaolian pretended to move closer and exchanged a few words with the girl with chubby cheeks. It was simply some words regarding his view toward the game. His criticism toward the foul actions by the visiting team soon aroused the girl's feeling of hate against a common enemy.

As their conversation was proceeding smoothly, perhaps due to Chen Xiaolian having fairly good looks, the chubby faced girl glanced at him and asked. "You are not from our school, are you?"

"En, I am here to find a friend," Chen Xiaolian inserted his hands into his pockets. "Do you know Han Bi?"

"Han Bi? The fellow who plays with aircraft models?"

Chen Xiaolian smiled. It appeared that Han Bi was quite a famous person within his school – as expected of one who could be selected to participate in an international competition for aircraft models; he was clearly someone of repute within the school.

The chubby cheeked girl glanced at Chen Xiaolian and replied. "You came here for Han Bi? I thought you came here to look for Yu Jiajia."

"Who?"

"Yu Jiajia," The chubby cheeked girl gestured toward a group of students at the bottom left side of the stands. There were roughly seven or eight girls there. Amid those girls was a girl wearing a white coloured wool sweater, sporting a ponytail. From a distance away, she exuded a look of purity. The other students sat around her like stars gathering around the moon. As for her, she simply sat there in the middle, like a small white flower.

“Our school beauty,” The girl with chubby cheeks curled the corners of her lips. “She filmed two advertisements before and likes football. Every time our school team participates in a competition, she would surely arrive. A lot of boys from the other schools will take this opportunity to secretly catch a glimpse of her. There are also many who pretend to like football in order to get close to her. I thought you are one of her fans.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled and looked at the girl known as Yu Jiajia again. She possessed quite the good looks, especially her eyes. Her eyes were captivating and clear. However, due to the distance between them, Chen Xiaolian was unable to see much more of her.

“I am here to find Han Bi. Do you know where I can find him?”

“The school has yet to open. So, he is probably not at school,” The girl with chubby cheeks pondered and replied. “Aren’t you his friend? Why did you run over to his school to find him? Do you not have his phone number?”

“Err, I am his friend from junior high school,” Chen Xiaolian quickly made up a story. “I am from another district. Now that I am here in Hangzhou, I thought about meeting up with him. However, I do not have his number...”

The girl with chubby cheeks was enthusiastic and she smiled. “That is easy. Wait for a bit. I will help you find out about it. There seems to be some fellows from Han Bi’s class here.”

The girl with chubby cheeks had Chen Xiaolian wait right there as she went over to the group of students congregating at the bottom side of the stand.

Coincidentally, the game entered an intermission and the competition was paused. Players from both sides left the field. The emotions of those involved in the game were running high and everyone was in a bad mood. The players did not even shake hands with one another. Some were even cursing out expletives. If not for the existence of referee and coaches, a brawl would likely have broken out.

Chen Xiaolian watched from far away, as the girl with chubby cheeks

approached the group of students within the stand.

The girl known as Yu Jiajia was indeed a famous figure here. Members of the home team could be seen running over to start a conversation with her.

The girl appeared reserved. However, her attitude was somewhat haughty. Even so, her behaviour only served to stoke the fires of enthusiasm within those boys covered in mud.

During the intermission, a group of substitute players went onto the field to warm up.

Then, something happened.

As some of the boys were warming up in the sports field, they deliberately talked loudly. It appeared that they were attempting to get the attention of Yu Jiajia. After gesturing about for a while, they placed some footballs on the ground and pointed at a spot on the stand. They laughed loudly and shouted a few words.

The spot they were indicating was the side corner of the stand. There were several patio umbrellas set up there and a very thin figure in grey coloured clothes was slowly closing up the patio umbrellas. He was the only one to work on it and his actions were slow, albeit clumsy.

One of the substitute members of the home team shouted out a few words and made some gestures, eliciting the laughter of the others.

Then, they did something.

Those boys rushed forward and kicked the footballs placed on the ground.

Their objective was obvious. It was the distant patio umbrellas.

The thin youngster who was in the middle of working was not aware of all those. As he was diligently trying to keep one of the patio umbrellas, several footballs descended from the skies!

The techniques of those boys were terrible. However, there were several of them. Seven to eight footballs descended upon the youngster, one of

them struck a patio umbrella, causing the patio umbrella to tilt, and the gathered rainwater poured down onto the thin youngster's body. The thin youngster became drenched from head to toe and his entire body became like a soaked chicken.

Several of the boys who kicked the footballs forward laughed out until their bodies were bent from the act. Some of them even let out jeers.

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

Likewise, the youngster who was drenched from head to toe did not say anything. He simply turned around to look in their direction for a moment before slowly rolling up the patio umbrella. Then, he quietly left through the edge of the sports field.

The youngster's timid behaviour appeared to have instigated the violent nature of those boys. Their shouts became louder as a result. One of them tried to show off... back then, the football which struck the patio umbrella was his handiwork. In order to attract the attention of the girls on the stand, the fellow had become carried away.

He placed down another football and sent it flying with a kick. The football flew over toward the thin youngster.

This time, the football did not strike the youngster. Instead, it struck the pool of water beside him. The falling football caused the water from the pool to spray up, and a good portion of it splashed onto the body of the thin youngster.

The thin youngster turned his head around, his expression revealing annoyance. However, he dared not shout back and only muttered a few words.

Chen Xiaolian noticed that the youngster's appearance was very ordinary. As for his expression... it appeared that he was used to it.

Presently, he appeared very annoyed. However, there was also fear in his expression. He was both thin and short and he dared not provoke those players with stocky bodies. All he did was curse out in a whisper.

It was then that Yu Jiajia who was seated on the stand laughed out.

Maybe it was due to this action of hers, at any rate, the football players became riled up.

The fellow who kicked the football suddenly became excited; it was as though he had been injected with chicken blood. [1]

He was showing dissatisfaction toward the muttering of the thin youngster.

“Who are you cursing with your grumbling?!”

The fellow became increasingly arrogant and he ran toward the edge of the sports field. Grabbing the thin youngster, he knocked him over, throwing him down onto a pool of water.

Chen Xiaolian was unable to stand by anymore.

Even if you want to bully others, this was too much!

The thin figure of the youngster got up from the pool of water. This time, it appeared that he was enraged. He shouted out and pounced forward, grabbing onto the waist of the football player. Unfortunately, his strength was insufficient. He was thrown off and fell down the ground.

At present, several other players had run over. They encircled the youngster and shoved him about. Some started punching and kicking him.

Seeing the poor youngster brought down onto the ground again, the students on the stands laughed to the point of bending over. They seemed to be watching the performance of a clown.

Chen Xiaolian's face turned ugly and he stood up from his seat.

The girl with chubby cheeks walked back and saw the look of indignation on Chen Xiaolian's face. She saw that Chen Xiaolian was planning to interfere and she quickly held him back. “It would be better for you not to go over. Otherwise, you will get beaten up.”

“Is this the ethics of your school?” Chen Xiaolian sneered.

The girl with chubby cheeks revealed an awkward expression and she said in a low tone of voice. “Those football players are all students who specialize in sports. They usually like to stir up trouble and think of

themselves as great heroes. They believe that girls like it when they act that way, a bunch of brain-damaged people. Why bother looking for trouble with them? Not everyone from our school is like that.”

Pausing, the girl with chubby cheeks whispered. “That fellow who is being pushed around is someone who is constantly being bullied. However, no one will help him out.”

“Why?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“I hear that he is a graduate from our school. However, something happened in his family. A few years back, his parents were arguing about a divorce and they ended up fighting. The father then used a knife to stab the mother to death. It was supposedly an accidental murder; the father was arrested, and he was given an indefinite jail sentence. This fellow on the other hand, appears a little simple minded and foolish. It seems he had received quite the shock, causing some problems here,” The girl with chubby cheeks pointed at her head and gave a wry smile. “Naturally, he was unable to get into a university. After having something like this happen to his family, he no longer has anyone to take care of him. He also has no money. Thus, the sub-district government agency negotiated with the school a way to let him live. And that is to let him work in school – they cannot let him starve to death after all. He is too foolish. From what I heard, something once happened as the team was undergoing training. Some of those wild kids tore down the training equipment. As the administrator in charge, he foolishly went to report the matter to the school. Thus, he ended up inciting hatred from these group of boys. Every now and again, these boys would come and bully him. The fellow is foolish anyway and he dares not fight back when bullied – even if he wants to fight back, he does not have the strength to do so.”

“The school just ignores them?”

“Those boys are all specialized in sports. Their grades may be a mess, but they have athletic talent. Some of them have already enrolled into their respective universities. For the sake of their enrolment record, the school will not cause any issue for those boys, provided they do not cause

too big of an issue,” The girl with chubby cheeks shrugged her shoulders. “Do not bother with all these. No one will come to solve this issue. These boys are vicious. Even students from our schools get beaten up by them. If you go over, you will certainly end by being beaten by them! See there? That boy in the middle is trying to woo Yu Jiajia. As it so happens, Yu Jiajia is right here. Having someone go over is just what he wants. That way, he will be able to show off just how powerful he is.”

Seeing that Chen Xiaolian was not saying anything, the girl with chubby cheeks thought that he had become scared. She laughed and said. “Let us go. I have already asked around for Han Bi’s phone number. However, they want to ask who you are before giving it to you. Just follow me.”

After saying that, the girl turned around, wanting to lead Chen Xiaolian away. However, after taking a few steps, she realized that Chen Xiaolian was not following her. Turning around, she saw that the fair faced youngster had already walked down. He lightly jumped over the fence of the stands and onto the sports field. He then walked through the rain toward the group of boys who were bullying the youngster.

“Sigh! Why won’t you listen to my advice? This is just asking for a beating,” The girl with chubby cheeks became nervous.

...

Chen Xiaolian had both his hands inside his pockets as he walked all the way until he reached the edge of the sports field. Even from afar, he could see the boys continuously pushing down the thin youngster. Every time the thing youngster attempted to rise up from the pool, he would be pushed down.

“Haven’t you guys had enough?” Chen Xiaolian slowly walked over before shouting out with a cool voice.

The fellow in the middle heard him and turned around to size up Chen Xiaolian. When he realized that the one he faced was a fair faced boy who was one head shorter than he was, he showed a fierce expression on his face and cursed out.

Chen Xiaolian was not able to fully understand what the fellow said. However, he could guess that it was nothing good. The fellow was probably telling him to mind his own business.

Chen Xiaolian ignored him and walked over. His shoulders lightly bumped into two football players who were standing before him, causing them to fall back to the side. Then, Chen Xiaolian continued walking forward. He extended one hand to pull up the thin youngster who was inside the pool of water.

Up close, the youngster appeared even thinner and shorter than he had expected.

Chen Xiaolian's height was somewhat flawed at only 170 cm. This youngster was shorter than Chen Xiaolian by a notch. Additionally, his thin arms and spindly legs gave the impression that his body was not fully developed. Both his face and body were drenched and his hair were clumped together due to the water. He stood amid the cold wind, shivering, his eyes revealing numbness.

A football player stepped forward and grabbed Chen Xiaolian's shoulder, only to be thrown off. The football player fell onto the ground and cursed out.

The other football players gathered around Chen Xiaolian and they uttered harsh words.

Chen Xiaolian frowned. "What a mouthful of expletives. Can't you people speak human words?"

One of the football players lashed out with a kick. Chen Xiaolian did not dodge the kick. Before the football player's kick could connect, Chen Xiaolian's foot had left a footprint on the football player's abdomen area. The fellow screamed out as he was sent flying backward and fell onto the muddy ground. His body rolled over due to momentum.

"You like to step on others so much?" Chen Xiaolian sneered.

Chen Xiaolian showed no hesitation toward the other two football players who came rushing over. He sent out a kick for each of them,

sending both down the ground. They held their stomachs as they bent their bodies, incapable to getting up.

Chen Xiaolian's hands remained inside his pockets; his eyes coldly sweeping through the area.

The remaining people were shocked.

These were simply a bunch of bad boys with not much in terms of courage. Normally, they would depend on their strength to bully others. Now that they had encountered a tough opponent, they could only look on with a dazed expression.

The one who was leading the group in this act of bullying appeared embarrassed. This was especially so after he found that the group of girls on the stand were all looking over.

He clenched his teeth and cursed out with another expletive again. Just as he was about to throw a punch, Chen Xiaolian pulled out his hand from his pocket and slapped the fellow in the face.

Pa!

The sound of the slap rang out loud!

The sound was both clear and loud and nearly half the people within the sports field were able to hear it.

"I..." The fellow was slapped senseless. He was momentarily stunned before screaming out. "F** your..."

Before he could utter out the last word, he received yet another slap to the face!

This slap threw him down to the side and he fell into the pool of water, both sides of his face having turned swollen.

"You like to fight? What is the point in fighting those weaker than you? If you like to fight that much, then I will accompany you."

Chen Xiaolian's eyes stared at the two remaining people who were still standing. These two had clearly become terrified and they retreated, step by step.

At that moment, several middle-aged men ran over, two of them were referees and another two who were probably the team coaches.

Chen Xiaolian had no interest in talking with these people, especially the coaches – to be able to produce bastards like these, those coaches was clearly nothing good.

One of the coaches attempted to pull Chen Xiaolian and was thrown off instead while the other one was shouting something loudly. He was probably using his identity as a teacher as he attempted to question Chen Xiaolian which school he came from.

“The only reason I am not beating you up is because I am giving you some face. Don’t you dare assume that I will not beat you up,” Chen Xiaolian coldly spat out. “If you want to let your students watch as you get your ass handed to you, then by all means, keep shouting.”

Although the coach was an adult, he too, was clearly scared.

The ability to beat up several of those football players was something rare even among adults. Moreover, these students who specialize and play football all day long have a very strong physique.

The coaches were clearly terrified. They quickly shouted out something about bringing them to the infirmary and to look for a stretcher. They carried the football players who were beaten up and ran off. Before running off, they even spat out a few harsh words.

Chen Xiaolian was able to understand those words. They were simply saying things like reporting to the police or looking for the school security.

Chen Xiaolian did not bother trying to reason with those fellows. Instead, he pulled up the youngster who was being bullied and pulled him over to the area under the canopy.

The youngster too, had become terrified. He wore a dazed look as Chen Xiaolian was dragging him over to the area under the canopy. Then, he sat down on a seat in a timid manner.

“Holy shit! You are so good at fighting! Where did you come from?” The

girl with chubby cheeks came over, her face was filled with excitement.

“You said you found Han Bi’s classmates? Where are they?”

“I will bring you over. However...” The girl with chubby cheeks revealed a troubled expression.

It was not long before Chen Xiaolian came to understand the reason behind her troubled expression.

...

He stood before a group of girls within the stands. It was clear from their expressions that the group of girls was not feeling happy – after all, Chen Xiaolian had just swept the floor with the football players of their home team.

This was especially true for one girl with short hair and pointed chin. The girl was the one that the chubby cheeked girl had found, Han Bi’s classmate. Unfortunately, her attitude was unbearable. “Why should I tell you Han Bi’s phone number? Go find it out yourself!”

Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

The girl with chubby cheeks chuckled from beside him. “She is the girlfriend of one of the football players that you beat up.”

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian came to understand the situation. He looked at the girl and hesitated for a moment before turning around to walk away.

The act of threatening a girl was something Chen Xiaolian was unable to do; he also had no interest in doing something like that. After having beaten up someone’s boyfriend, it was improbable to hope for the person to help him.

At any rate, finding Han Bi should not be too difficult – he was simply an ordinary student and not some head of state. Since his identity was not something confidential, Chen Xiaolian could just ask about elsewhere.

“Hey! Are you thinking about running away? Running away after beating someone up! Let me tell you, I have already reported to the

police!”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly stopped moving.

He felt that he should give these girls a lesson.

He turned around and walked toward the fence located before the field stand.

The girls were feeling fearful and the short-haired girl with pointed chin was so fearful, she diverted her gaze away. “You... you dare to beat up a girl?”

“Let me teach you something,” Chen Xiaolian looked straight into her eyes and said in a soft voice. “Remember, a real bad guy does not care about something like beating up girls. This attitude of yours is only of use when going up against a good person. When you encounter a real bad guy, this attitude of yours will result in you being beaten up until you lose your teeth, understand?”

The short-haired girl with pointed chin. “... ..”

“Secondly, you said you reported this matter to the police? It would be best for you to resolve that issue soon. I do not care what you tell the police. Just remember, if the police ever come to trouble me, then I will come over to your school every day. When that happens, your dear boyfriend will get to enjoy a beating every day.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian pointed at the fence beside them... it was the standard metal fence commonly placed before a field stand, built using metal pipe as thick as an egg.

Chen Xiaolian extended his hand and easily tore out one of the metal poles. Next, he twisted it to form a U-shape!

“I doubt your boyfriend’s bone is harder than this,” Chen Xiaolian smiled and ignored the students who were scared stiff from his actions. He turned around and left.

Of course, he did not forget to pull the thin youngster who was bullied earlier out of there with him.

Standing in front of the school gate, Chen Xiaolian looked at the skinny youngster before him.

Standing before the school gate, Chen Xiaolian looked at the thin youngster before him.

The thin youngster wore thick work uniform, but was fully drenched in mud water.

His hair was thinning, his chin angular with a sparse amount of stubble upon it. He gave off the image of a dirty person.

“What is your name?”

No answer.

“How old are you?”

No answer.

“Where do you live?”

The youngster’s eyes gave a slight flicker and he pointed toward the school.

“You live in the school?”

He did not answer and only quietly nodded his head.

“Do those people always bully you?”

The youngster looked at Chen Xiaolian, a numb expression revealed upon his face. It was as though there was no reaction from him.

Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile and rubbed his nose. “I say, back then, I helped you out. Shouldn’t you at least say thank you?”

“... thank you,” The youngster replied in an indifferent and stiff voice.

Chen Xiaolian came to believe the words of the chubby cheeked girl. This youngster was likely suffering from some mental issues.

He then took out his wallet and retrieved all the red coloured bills out. After that, he shoved them into the youngster’s hand. “Just go.”

The youngster did not move. He looked at the money within his hand

and gripped it tightly until it formed a ball. Then, he looked up at Chen Xiaolian and asked. "You are... looking for someone?"

Chen Xiaolian's heart skipped a beat. "Han Bi! Do you know him? He is a student who studies in this school. He likes to play with aircraft models."

"I know," The youngster nodded his head stiffly.

Chen Xiaolian became delighted. "Then, do you know how to contact him? Or his place of residence?"

"... .." The youngster silently shook his head.

"Sigh," Chen Xiaolian let out a sigh. "Never mind. You should head home. Your entire body is wet, you should go get a hot bath or you will end up falling sick. Next time, keep an eye out for those football players and make sure to keep your distance from them. Just hide from them for some time. Once they graduate, you will not have to worry about them anymore."

The youngster turned around and was about to leave when suddenly, he turned back and shoved the roll of bills back toward Chen Xiaolian.

"I... am no fool," The youngster said in a stiff manner before turning around and leaving.

Observing the back of the thin youngster walking away amid the rain, Chen Xiaolian was suddenly visited by a strange feeling.

A faint feeling welled up from deep within his heart, then...

"Hey!"

A clear voice from behind interrupted Chen Xiaolian's thoughts.

Turning around, he saw a black coloured car parked beside the street.

The window of the car rolled down.

A girl's face was revealed from inside.

Black coloured ponytail and a white coloured wool sweater. With her pure and pleasant appearance and her glittering eyes, she gave off the

image of a standard pure girl.

It was none other than the school beauty known as Yu Jiajia, the one whom he had seen back in the sports field stand.

Although she was very beautiful, Chen Xiaolian had no interest in her.

More accurately, after what happened earlier, he did not have a good impression toward this girl.

She was probably the type of girl that would often be labelled as a 'Goddess' by those around her. Relying on their beauty, these females would garner the attention and flattery of those around her. They will deliberately attract the attention of males and provoke the males to fight one another. As for them, they would never feel bored of such a spectacle.

There were many of such females in this world. Even in Chen Xiaolian's school, such characters existed.

Back then, in order to gain her attention, the football players went to bully an innocent. However, all she did was sit at the side-lines as a silent spectator. That act of hers left a bad impression within Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian ignored her. Turning around, he walked away along the side of the street.

"Hey!" Yu Jiajia felt somewhat surprised. However, the car soon caught up to him as it slowly drove along the side of the street, in parallel with Chen Xiaolian.

"Who are you?"

Chen Xiaolian ignored her.

"How can you be so lacking in manners?"

"Earlier, why did you threaten the girls?"

"Hey! I'm talking to you."

Chen Xiaolian treated her as though she was air and continued walking forward.

"Aren't you looking for Han Bi?"

Chen Xiaolian stopped in his tracks. At the same time, the car too, stopped.

He turned to look at the girl inside the car. "You..."

"I know him."

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "Just now, someone had already informed me. There was indeed a classmate of Han Bi among your group of girls. However, that person is the short-haired girl and not you."

"That is correct," Yu Jiajia deliberately smiled. It seemed she really have filmed some advertisements before. She knew how to adjust her smile lightly to accentuate her own beauty. However, Chen Xiaolian had no interest in her intentional charm. Yu Jiajia smiled and said. "I am indeed not Han Bi's classmate. But, I am his classmate from junior high school. So, I know where he lives."

Chen Xiaolian's expression became serious.

The matter of finding Han Bi was not exactly hard. However, it was also not an easy matter.

Han Bi had already become an Awakened. Thus, there was a high probability that he would not return to the school.

Chen Xiaolian had already made up his mind. If he were unable to find him in the day, he would break into the school at night and go through the student records.

Back then, he had broken into that heavily guarded research institute. How could a mere ordinary high school stop him?

Having said that, since this person before him claimed to know where Han Bi lives...

"You really know?" Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes.

"Of course," Yu Jiajia pondered for a moment. Then, she purposely gave a wink and asked. "But why should I tell you?"

Chen Xiaolian sighed. "I have no interest in playing your childish games. Out with it, what would it take for you to tell me?"

Yu Jiajia regarded Chen Xiaolian and realized that this boy's eyes were very resolute and thorough. Unlike the other boys, when he was looking at her, his eyes did not reveal any feelings of passion – it was not as though she had never seen such a type of eyes before. However, even if those males try to put up a false pretence of calmness and resolution, their eyes would occasionally betray their desires.

This fellow on the other hand, when he was looking at her, his eyes seemed to reveal a faint trace of disgust.

“I am not trying to cause problems for you,” Yu Jiajia suddenly felt a little nervous and she spoke out in a low voice. “Just now, I was going out of the school and I saw you give that fellow money. Why did you do so? Do you know him? Why do you want to help him?”

“I could not stand their actions, so I went out to help him. Just consider me as a busybody who is too kind for my own good,” Chen Xiaolian said with a calm voice.

Yu Jiajia bit her lips and said. “Get on the car. I will bring you over to Han Bi's house.”

Chen Xiaolian did not show any hesitation and simply pulled open the car door and entered.

As for whether or not this was an act by a group of students who were trying to get revenge by sending someone to lure him over to some place, then getting some other people to get revenge for them...

Chen Xiaolian did not even bother considering those matters.

Considering how he had started up a tank and blasted the armoured vehicles of the Special Assault Team, matters of assaulting some high school students became a negligible issue for him.

“Ah! You...” Yu Jiajia became slightly flustered.

The main reason for that was because Chen Xiaolian had opened up the door to the back passenger seats – what she had intended was for Chen Xiaolian to sit in the first passenger seat in front.

Chen Xiaolian squeezed himself into the back seat and the girl immediately shrank back. The car was rather small and it became somewhat cramped. The girl's cheek turned light red as a result.

The chauffeur turned around and glanced at Chen Xiaolian, his eyes conveying a certain warning. Chen Xiaolian simply ignored it.

"Miss?"

"Head out to XXX Street," Yu Jiajia said while putting on the façade of being undisturbed.

...

Along the way, Chen Xiaolian looked out the window in a bored manner and was not interested in striking up a conversation with Yu Jiajia.

The situation made Yu Jiajia feel rather awkward – whenever a male was alone with her, that person would do their utmost to find a topic in order to strike up a conversation with her in order to make her smile. However, this fellow was simply treating her as though she was nothing but air.

Yu Jiajia's life was clearly quite good... to possess a private car and a chauffeur, she was clearly not the child of an ordinary family. Additionally, the value of this imported car was not low.

Still, Chen Xiaolian had no interest in inquiring about those matters.

Ten minutes later, Yu Jiajia ran out of patience and spoke up. "You... are friends with Han Bi?"

"En."

"How did you get to know Han Bi?"

Chen Xiaolian glanced at her before replying. "Game."

"Game? Those online games?"

"En."

"You are very good at fighting. Are you a martial artist?"

"En."

“Do you practice wushu? Boxing? Taekwondo? Looking at your lean appearance, you simply do not look like someone who can fight.”

“... ..” This time, Chen Xiaolian was too lazy to even give an “en” for a reply.

“What is your name?”

“... ..” Likewise, Chen Xiaolian paid her no need.

This time, Yu Jiajia became furious. She snorted and chose to ignore Chen Xiaolian. Retrieving her pink coloured Apple iPhone 6, she began to play with it.

Chen Xiaolian had intended to ignore the girl. However, as he was looking outside the window, he happened to catch a glimpse of the reflection of Yu Jiajia and the screen of her mobile phone. The familiar interface quickly attracted Chen Xiaolian’s attention.

That...

Surprisingly, it was a very well-known app, a software interface for reading through mobile phones.

Furthermore, the interface of the novel she was accessing happened to be one that Chen Xiaolian was very familiar with! The striking cover of the novel was one that Chen Xiaolian had personally chosen!

Indeed, that was the novel that he had written!

Chen Xiaolian immediately lost his composure.

“Bastard!” Yu Jiajia suddenly cursed out.

“?” Chen Xiaolian turned his head around.

“Ah, I was not cursing you,” Yu Jiajia appeared rather embarrassed. She waved the mobile phone in her hand and said. “I am scolding an author. This fellow stopped updating his novel again! This time, he had not updated for several days! Last time, he claimed that he was suffering from diarrhoea and stopped updating for three days! This time, I wonder what kind of excuse he is going to cook up!”

A cold sweat trickled out of Chen Xiaolian's forehead.

Diarrhea?

Err, now that I think about it... back then, I did stop updating once. However, that time was really due to diarrhoea. Roddy had taken me to eat some barbeque. In the end, I suffered from food poisoning and ended up vomiting and suffering from diarrhoea for two days.

Chen Xiaolian dared not retort. He simply turned around and pretended to look out the window. However...

He has a [B+] class Physique after all. Not only has his physical strength increased, even his eyesight and ears have been enhanced.

Through the reflection from the windows, Chen Xiaolian saw Yu Jiajia typing something quickly into the mobile phone.

En... she was typing into the book review section.

“Stopped updating! You have no character! Author has no penis!”

—

Yu Jiajia, raw: ‘余佳佳’, pinyin: ‘yú jiā jiā’. ‘余’ (yú) means me or extra. ‘佳’ (jiā) means good or auspicious.

1 ‘Injected with chicken blood’ means to become emotional and excited toward something.

Chapter 159: Thrown Into The Sea

Chen Xiaolian could clearly see each of those words.

Do you have to be so harsh...

“Hmph! To think I had supported him up to Hegemon before!” Yu Jiajia suddenly burst out emotionally. “Do you know what a Hegemon is? Let me tell you...” [1]

Listening to the girl droning on and on, Chen Xiaolian was unable to say a word.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt as though he was thrown into a pot of boiling water.

He had originally occupied a psychological position of advantage. However, after learning that this girl was a reader of his novel who had spent so much money to support him... Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt guilty.

When this author who had stopped updating his novel was faced with this reader who had supported him so much, it was inevitable that he would feel guilty.

Thankfully, the car finally came to a halt.

“Miss, we have arrived.”

The chauffeur stopped the car and turned his head around. His eyes revealed wariness and he gazed at Chen Xiaolian with a cold expression.

“En, this is the place,” Yu Jiajia looked outside the window.

They were at a small residential complex. Appearance wise, the place seemed quite all right as the gate leading inside has security guards.

“I will accompany you inside.”

Yu Jiajia appeared to be in a good mood – probably due to her having vented her steam through cursing Chen Xiaolian in the book review section, she was feeling much better.

She got down from the other side of the car and walked toward the gate of the residential complex. Turning around, she saw Chen Xiaolian slowly moving forward. "Hurry up! I still need to hurry back to my home!"

"... thank you," Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Those words were spoken out with sincerity.

He did so not simply because Yu Jiajia had brought him to Han Bi's residence, but also because of her identity as one of his readers.

...

Han Bi lived in the ninth floor of a small building.

They stood at the entrance of the first floor and rang the bell for a long time. Unfortunately, there was no reply.

Yu Jiajia pursed her lips to the side and said. "This address is definitely correct. I have known Han Bi for a long time. He has been staying here for a long time without changing residences. Lately though, it seems as though he had disappeared. He did not even come to watch the football competition – he would usually arrive to spectate when there is a competition."

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He silently looked at the house number before him. Then, he raised his head to inspect the residential building and frowned.

"All right, this is his place of residence. However, maybe he went out," Yu Jiajia pondered it through and continued. "I do not know Han Bi's mobile phone number... our relationship is not that close. Although, I can help ask some of his classmates."

Yu Jiajia was clearly being enthusiastic – who knew what her reasons were.

Unfortunately, after obtaining Han Bi's phone number... calling the number resulted in the prompt notifying them that the phone was turned off.

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Yu Jiajia was left uncertain on how to proceed. "This... how about you come back later. Maybe he will be home later."

They left the residential complex together. Chen Xiaolian stood before the entrance to the residential complex as he watched Yu Jiajia getting on the car.

"Thank you for helping me so much," Chen Xiaolian sighed. "All right, I won't take up more of your time. I will think of something else."

Yu Jiajia sat in the car and looked out the window at Chen Xiaolian. Hesitating for a moment, she then spoke out in a low voice. "Hey!"

"Hmm?"

"I... am not a bad person," Yu Jiajia bit down on her lips. "Back in the sports field, I chose not to do anything because... last time, I had stopped them from bullying that person. However, I heard that they later went to beat up that person anyways. In fact, they went and gave him an even worse beating. That is why I..."

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "There is no need for you to explain those things to me."

"Are you such an indifferent and hateful person?" Yu Jiajia knitted her eyebrows. "Originally, I did not want to help you. But, back in the school, I saw you giving that person money and felt that you are a good person. That is why I decided to help you!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly smiled and waved his hand at her. "I understand... thank you. Also... hmm, next time, do not recklessly throw words like 'have no penis' at others. After all, you are a girl."

Yu Jiajia became shocked, her mouth forming an O. Then, she became enraged. "You... you were peeping at my phone! Hmph!"

The window was quickly rolled down and the car sped away.

Chen Xiaolian stood there with a smile on his face. After that, he turned around to look at the entrance to the residential complex, an absent-minded expression was etched on his face.

Han Bi... where has he gone to...

...

"Miss," While driving, the chauffeur said cautiously. "Next time, you should exercise more caution... a stranger like that..."

"Enough, don't be a busybody," Yu Jiajia produced her mobile phone and spat out angrily. "Detestable!"

Holding the mobile phone, she typed the words 'author has no penis' over ten times upon the interface. However, after thinking about something, she blushed and chose not to send it over. Instead, she deleted those words and left the interface.

"Detestable! How can there be such a detestable person?"

...Chen Xiaolian randomly found a convenience store within the residential complex and stood under the eaves to shelter himself from the rain. He silently observed the people coming and going through the entrance of the residential complex.

Other than this, he had no other way to find Han Bi. This method of sitting back and waiting may be a foolish one, but that was the only method he has for now.

At that moment however, Chen Xiaolian's mobile phone rang.

It was an unknown phone number.

"Hello?"

"Is this Chen Xiaolian?" An unfamiliar voice that carried with it a trace of authority and age came from the phone.

"Yes, may I know who is calling?"

"I am Qiao Qiao's father," The words spoken by the other party sent Chen Xiaolian into a state of anxiousness and he was at a loss for words. After wracking his brains for a long time, he finally managed to squeeze out a sentence. "Err... uncle... uncle, how are you."

"Let's meet up," The other party's tone of voice was calm. However, it

contained a steadfast atmosphere, which conveyed intolerance toward any objections.

“Now?” Chen Xiaolian was shocked. He looked at his surroundings. “I... I am not at home. I am at Hang...”

“I know you are at Hangzhou,” Qiao Qiao’s father replied coldly. “We will meet up in Hangzhou. In one hour... XXXXXX, this is the address. One more thing, do not tell Qiao Qiao!”

The call was cut off.

Chen Xiaolian was still holding onto the phone, his face one of shock.

Refuse?

The other side did not even give him the opportunity to refuse!

It would be more accurate to say that, even if Chen Xiaolian had any chance to speak, he could not refuse!

Since that night when he had spent an unforgettable day and night with Qiao Qiao in the hotel... the both of them rolling through the sheets... since then, he had lost any qualifications to refuse.

Firstly, the relationship between Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao was not that of a one-night stand.

The two of them had engaged in a serious matter. In the following period of time, within a normal and serious relationship, or more accurately... as long as one was not a bastard scum, after having rolled through the sheets with a girl, when one receives a request by the girl’s parent to meet up, most males would not be able to refuse!

After having had sex with someone’s daughter, are you not going to admit it?

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

He picked up the phone, planning to call Qiao Qiao but he suddenly recalled the last words by her father. More accurately, the words of warning...

He smiled wryly as he kept the mobile phone.

Let's just go!

As for Han Bi... since he already found his place of residence, monks can move away, but the temple cannot. He will just come back in the night.

[2]

Chen Xiaolian stopped a cab and got inside. Then, the cab set off.

...

The place designated by Qiao Qiao's father was naturally a very high-class spot.

A high-class hotel by the West Lake, within a cigar lounge of the hotel's private clubhouse...

The moment Chen Xiaolian arrived, he entered the hotel and inquired from the front desk before going to the elevator, where he set it to take him to the 3rd floor.

Right after stepping out of the elevator, he walked into the cigar lounge to see a young man in black suit standing there.

Chen Xiaolian was quickly able to notice the distinct aspects of the young man.

The man was very strong. Even though he was wearing a suit, it was clear that the suit was barely able to restrain the man's muscles.

If this body was not obtained through bodybuilding and hormonal drugs meant to stimulate muscle growth... then, the strength and lethality contained within those muscles would be very alarming!

"I am looking for..."

Without waiting for Chen Xiaolian to finish his sentence, the man narrowed his eyes and regarded Chen Xiaolian for a moment before nodding his head. "Mr. Chen Xiaolian? Please follow me. Mr. Qiao has been waiting for you."

The look given by the man earlier was obviously done to verify his

appearance and to assess him.

Chen Xiaolian quickly made his deduction.

He followed the man in black through a corridor until the end where there was a richly decorated door. The man in black lightly knocked the door and opened the door with both hands.

“Come in.”

...

The room was very large. It was one that was deliberately furnished in the traditional style.

Thick carpet, old furniture and a huge phonograph. The handle of the leather sofa was gilded with gold.

A middle-aged man was seated on the sofa near the window. Upon the surface of the table before him were cigars, cigar lighter, cigar cutter and the likes.

His hand was holding onto a Torpedo cigar and he puffed out clouds of smoke.

Appearance wise, there was clearly some resemblance between him and Qiao Qiao. He was simply more thickset and with much rougher lines on his person.

He simply sat there with a frown on his face. As Chen Xiaolian was walking inside, all he did was raise his eyelids a little but he did not move. He continued sitting there, smoking the cigar without saying a word.

Chen Xiaolian could sense the imposing demeanour projected by this man.

“Mr. Qiao... how are you.”

Chen Xiaolian had originally wanted to address him as uncle or something similar. However, noting the rough atmosphere exuding from the other party, Chen Xiaolian changed his mind.

“I am sorry. There were some traffic jams and I am not from around

here. That is why I arrived a little bit late.”

In fact, the agreed upon one hour had yet to expire. However, seeing as the elder had already arrived, Chen Xiaolian felt the need to say that.

Qiao Qiao’s father put down the cigar and carefully regarded Chen Xiaolian for a moment.

“Shorter than what I had expected. An average face,” Qiao Qiao’s father narrowed his eyes and gave a faint smile that contained a vague feeling of haughtiness. “I really do not understand how my daughter could end up liking someone like you.”

“Err...” Chen Xiaolian thought about it, but in the end he decide to just not say anything – when faced against such words, whatever he say would likely end up being a bad thing. At a time like this, maintaining silence was the smartest move.

“Did you know? Originally, I had been feeling very conflicted,” Qiao Qiao’s father said coldly. “I was considering how to deal with you.”

Chen Xiaolian maintained his silence.

“I am a father!” Qiao Qiao’s father said coldly. “When I found out that some brat took my daughter, who is not even eighteen years old into a hotel and then proceed to spend twenty hours inside together... did you know, the only thing I could think of was to kill you myself! Then, stuff you into a coffin and seal it with cement before throwing it into the sea!”

...

...

—

1 Hegemon is the highest title given to fans of a novel in Qidian. Titles are given based on the amount of ‘fan points’ accumulated. Example, one monthly ticket is the equivalent of 100 fan points. Below are the titles:

500 points: Apprentice

2,000 points: Disciple

5,000 points: Administrator

10,000 points: Leader

20,000 points: Hall Leader

30,000 points: Rule Enforcer

40,000 points: Elder

50,000 points: Grandmaster

70,000 points: Sect Master

100,000 points: Hegemon

2 'A monk can move away, the temple cannot' means one cannot run away with one's estates.

Chapter 160: Too Nonsensical!

“I...”

Chen Xiaolian felt restrained and hesitated on what he should say.

Qiao Qiao's father indifferently produced a stack of papers and tossed it onto the table.

“Chen Xiaolian, eighteen years old, resident of XX City, student of XXX School, also holds the identity of a web author who made a contract with a certain website. A web novel author with bank account number XXXXXXXX. One property under your name and a deposit of RMB 864,306.10...” Qiao Qiao's father spoke out in indifference.

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

Naturally, he knew that Qiao Qiao's family was extremely wealthy. For someone as rich and powerful as her father, finding information about himself was not much different from drinking a cup of coffee.

Moreover, Chen Xiaolian did not see anything wrong with the harsh attitude shown by Qiao Qiao's father.

For any father, if they were to find out that some brat had deceived their eighteen-year-old daughter, who was like a jade flower to them, and had proceeded to roll around the sheets with her... Chen Xiaolian believed that the words ‘the only thing I could think of was to kill you myself’ spoken by Qiao Qiao's father was no joke.

Regardless of which person's father it was, once they found out about this, their reaction would likely be the same.

“I have read up on the information about you. You do not appear to be a bad kid; the circumstances behind your birth and your family circumstance does not appear bad either. Living alone at such a young age, and to be able to have a decent career. Considering your age, being able to earn such an amount of money is quite the feat... however, you two are still too young,” Qiao Qiao's father appeared to be suppressing his rage. “If you two were simply friends, I would not oppose! However...

you actually took her into a hotel! Bastard!”

Veins popped up across the surface of his forehead. Clearly, the rage within Qiao Qiao’s father had reached a critical point, which could no longer be suppressed.

Chen Xiaolian waited for him to finish speaking. Then, he carefully assessed the other party’s emotions. Seeing that no more words were incoming, he carefully spoke out in a low voice. “Mr. Qiao. I... Qiao Qiao and I are serious.”

“Serious my ass. How old are you two,” Qiao Qiao’s father angrily snapped out.

“... ..”

“Do you know? I can make you quietly disappear from this world. After that... no one will come to investigate this matter at all,” Qiao Qiao’s father narrowed his eyes and a dangerous glint flashed out from within them.

Chen Xiaolian believed those words.

Provided of course... if he was still an ordinary person.

In that case, if someone as powerful and influential as Qiao Qiao’s father wanted an ordinary person to disappear, it would not be too hard.

However... under the current circumstances, the reverse may be more appropriate.

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian was not someone with brain damage and would not utter those words. He simply maintained a stance of respect.

“Break up immediately!” The words coming out of Qiao Qiao’s father revealed no tolerance toward any objection. “Although your qualification is not bad, you are still not good enough for my daughter. Not to mention, you even dared to molest her! From this moment onward, from the moment you step out of this room, if you dare to have any contact with her again, I will make sure you disappear for good!”

Chen Xiaolian raised his head and stared at Qiao Qiao’s father. “Don’t

you think that this request of yours is too much?"

"Hmm?"

"Qiao Qiao is your daughter. However, first of all, she is a person," Chen Xiaolian tried his best to use a moderate tone of voice as he spoke. "She has the right to decide who she wants to be with and who she wants to befriend. She is your daughter, but she is not your slave and certainly not your toy. You have no right to decide whom she should be with or whom she should not be with. Besides, I have already said it before. Our relationship is a serious one. We are not just playing around. We are really..."

"If seems you are quite the gutsy person," Qiao Qiao's father laughed out in sheer fury. Looking at Chen Xiaolian, he sneered. "Do you know? It has been a long time since someone dared to talk to me like this."

"... .." Chen Xiaolian chose to say nothing.

"I have no interest in discussing philosophy with you," Qiao Qiao's father waved his hand. "My decision is final. I am also not giving you any options. I am simply informing you my decision. Listen up, brat! This is a warning. Due to the matter between you and my daughter, you are able to stand here before me to listen to my words! If not for that, someone like you will never have the chance to stand before me for the rest of your life! Understood? Right now, I am simply telling you what you should do regarding this matter. I am not discussing it with you. If you are unwilling... then leave through that door. As for what will happen in the future... you can consider that yourself."

After saying that, Qiao Qiao's father sat down on the sofa. Picking up a cigar, he took a deep drag from it.

Chen Xiaolian sighed. He stood there as he hesitantly struggled mentally – naturally, he was not struggling to decide whether or not to break up with Qiao Qiao. He was struggling to think of a way to deal with this elder before him.

Considering the identity of the other party, Chen Xiaolian could not possibly be furious or start an argument with him. Those actions would

be inappropriate. As for the use of violence such as summoning out Garfield or Bai Qi to... exterminate him?

Hey, what kind of a preposterous action is that?

“Hesitant?” Qiao Qiao’s father looked at Chen Xiaolian and snorted. He believed that Chen Xiaolian was shaken.

Logically speaking, a powerless youngster like Chen Xiaolian would have no resource or clout to go against him.

“Do you see the table on your left?” Qiao Qiao’s father said coldly. “There is an envelope on the table. Within the envelope is a check. It is not much, just 5 million; enough for you to leave the city that you are currently staying at and find a new place, buy up a new house and enrol in a new school.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at the envelope placed upon the table. He did not reach out for it. Instead, he turned and looked at Qiao Qiao’s father.

He smiled.

“Mr. Qiao, you really know how to negotiate,” Chen Xiaolian let out a faint smile. “First use the stick, then give a sweet date. Utilize both kindness and power, soft and hard, the carrot and stick approach. However, I think you probably forgot about something.”

“What?”

“Qiao Qiao is a person, not a business and most certainly not something you can turn into a transaction,” Chen Xiaolian raised his head.

“Did you think we are filming a movie? A poor boy falls for a wealthy girl and the girl’s parents then breaks them up?” Qiao Qiao’s father sneered. “Scram now. Either you take the check or scram.”

Observing the steel like expression given off by Qiao Qiao’s father, Chen Xiaolian knew that there was no longer any room for discussion.

It was apparent that this old man was in a very bad mood. At a time like this, trying to continue their discussion would only lead to conflicts.

He chose to leave.

Chen Xiaolian left.

Without showing any hesitation, he turned around and walked away. He did not even bother looking at the envelope on the table.

Bang.

After the door was close, Qiao Qiao's father looked at the door, fury flashing across his eyes. But then, he frowned and snorted. "He is quite the unyielding one, hmph!"

...

Chen Xiaolian walked out of the cigar lounge and reached the corridor. Then, he saw the man in black standing there.

The man had a wooden expression on his face, showing neither anger nor laughter. He simply regarded Chen Xiaolian in a calm manner as Chen Xiaolian walked out. His eyes did not leave Chen Xiaolian's figure and he took half a step back to allow Chen Xiaolian through.

It was not until Chen Xiaolian had entered the elevator and left did the man give a frown. His expression indicated that he was deep in thought.

He turned around and walked into the room at the end of the corridor.

"Is it time?" Qiao Qiao's father turned to look at the man in black entering the room. He gently stubbed the cigar on the ashtray.

"There is still some time," The man in black said slowly. "Sir, the doctor had mentioned before, you cannot get too angry."

"The bratty bastard!" Qiao Qiao's father spat out coldly. "Are all of today's youngsters like that? He simply does not know the height of the Heavens or the depth of the Earth."

The man in black revealed a peculiar expression and appeared hesitant. His expression was noticed by Qiao Qiao's father, who frowned in return. "Why are you making such a strange expression? If you have anything to say, then just say it."

"... understood," The man in black nodded and considered his words. After carefully selecting his words, he said in a low voice. "I feel that this

youngster is not that simple.”

“What?”

“He should possess excellent skills,” The man in black tried to use the most accurate and concise words as he spoke. “From the way he walks, it appears that he is maintaining a constant state of vigilance. That should be a subconscious form of action. Only someone who has undergone a great deal of danger would have this type of characteristic. Additionally... I have this feeling.”

“Feeling?”

“He... is likely very dangerous,” The man in black answered.

“Dangerous?” Qiao Qiao’s father suddenly burst out in an absurd fit of laughter. Then, he turned his gaze back to the man in black and furrowed his eyebrows. “Excellent skills? To think that someone like you would say that he has excellent skills. When you say he has excellent skills, how excellent is it? Is it high enough to pose a threat to you?”

“I do not know. I am unable to determine that,” The man in black shook his head. “However, according to his data, there is no record of him training in martial arts. The data on him shows that he should be a normal teenager.”

“Send some men to keep an eye on him,” Qiao Qiao’s father quickly made a decision. “If he contacts or meet up with Qiao Qiao again, let me know immediately.”

“Understood.”

Qiao Qiao’s father raised his head to look at the clock on the wall. “It is almost time. She should be arriving soon, yes?”

“I had just contacted her. She is on the way and will be arriving soon.”

Within the eyes of Qiao Qiao’s father, a hint of gentleness appeared. “Is the dinner ready?”

“It is ready. They are all the dishes that she likes to eat.”

...

After walking out from the hotel's lobby, Chen Xiaolian saw that it was still drizzling. The cool winds caressed him and his mind calmed down slightly.

This... what is this supposed to be?

The old man wants us to break up?

Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly. "Do you have to stage such an exaggerated drama? As a writer, this is just too distressful. This kind of drama is the type you see on prime time."

Or maybe... I should just toss out the Thunderstorm Tank before this old man? Then, ride on Garfield and fly one round through the skies?

Tell him: Your daughter's boyfriend is Superman?

Stop joking around!

At that moment, a black luxury sedan suddenly slowed down as it approached and stopped before the entrance of the hotel.

The car was very familiar and Chen Xiaolian subconsciously stepped backward.

He watched as the hotel door attendant went forward to pull open the door of the car.

A girl wearing a white coloured wool sweater stepped out of the car.

It is her?

It was the girl that had separated from him just earlier, Yu Jiajia.

Yu Jiajia had obviously been dolling herself up. Her face was no longer clear. Instead, she wore a thin layer of makeup. Her originally pure face now appeared exquisite and arousing. Her hair was no longer tied up into a ponytail. Instead, it was loosened and it flowed down her shoulders.

Yu Jiajia casually looked around and Chen Xiaolian subconsciously shrank backward and hid behind a pot of bonsai.

Then, something even more surprising happened!

Qiao Qiao's father emerged from the lobby of the hotel.

He wore a white coloured trench coat, the collar lifted high up. Beside him, the man in black followed. The man in black's eyes darted about. Clearly, he was playing the role of a bodyguard.

The moment Qiao Qiao's father reached the entrance, Yu Jiajia's face lit up with a smile. Like a swallow rushing back home, she exclaimed and jumped into the arms of Qiao Qiao's father!

Unlike the time when he was meeting up with Chen Xiaolian, the expression on Qiao Qiao's father was now different. Upon his face was a smile so wide it caused his eyes to squint. Yu Jiajia planted a light kiss on his cheeks and held onto his arms. Then, the two of them walked out of the hotel and into the black coloured sedan.

The man in black entered the first passenger's seat.

The sedan slowly drove away, leaving the hotel.

"Ho... holy shit!" Chen Xiaolian was flabbergasted as the sight.

This... what kind of drama is this?

I... I may have inadvertently discovered a huge scandal!

Qiao Qiao's father... he is actually... sugar daddying a female student?

Hmm, that is right... I hear that Yu Jiajia is her school's beauty and had filmed some advertisements before.

Probably a third-rate star... [1]

A filthy rich man sugar daddying a rising starlet?

Isn't this story getting way too ridiculous?

How unexpected!

As Chen Xiaolian was feeling surprised, he noticed something!

A white coloured Volkswagen that had been parked by the hotel entrance suddenly started up and drove forward; it was following the black coloured sedan that Qiao Qiao's father was in.

Chen Xiaolian could clearly make out the interior of the car and saw the man in the first passenger seat holding a pair of binoculars.

Bodyguards?

Doesn't look like it!

Those people were wearing civilian clothes, a stark contrast with the suit worn by the man in black who was following Qiao Qiao's father.

Additionally... would bodyguards secretly follow from behind?

Paparazzi?

That was more unlikely.

There were four people within the white coloured Volkswagen. Although he only got a cursory look at them, Chen Xiaolian was able to determine that they were all tall and muscular figures!

He stopped thinking too deep into it. Instead, he ran forward to the side and opened the doors to a cab that was waiting outside the hotel for guests.

“Chase after the white coloured Volkswagen in front!”

The driver turned around to look at Chen Xiaoilan. “Sir, my car has been booked by a guest...”

Chen Xiaolian immediately pulled out a stack of red coloured bills and threw it over. There were a total of over twenty pieces. “Just drive!”

The driver did not utter anything else and he immediately started up the car!

As his one hand was pulling the gear, he did not forget to use his other hand to pick up the bills.

—

1 A third-rate star is something of a belittling term given to, you guessed it, stars that are not famous at all.

Chapter 161: Meet Once More

It was currently rush hour.

Thus, they were able to quickly catch up... in just ten minutes, the black coloured sedan where Qiao Qiao's father was in, the white coloured Volkswagen and the cab where Chen Xiaolian was in were all stuck in the same crossroad.

The cab driver glanced suspiciously at Chen Xiaolian as he attempted to guess Chen Xiaolian's circumstance.

Bringing out a stack of bills to get a cab in order to chase the car in front – this was something one would usually see in dramas.

“Little friend, looking at your age, you do not seem like the police... are you chasing after your girlfriend?” The driver opened his mouth and asked.

Chen Xiaolian gave an “en” and glanced at him. “Do not ask so much, just chase after the car in front. Do not ask about other stuff.”

Snubbed, the driver shut up his mouth. Although he was not too happy with it, back when he accepted the money, he saw that there were at least two thousand yuans there. That much money was the equivalent of several days' worth of income for him.

Oh well, those who have money is king.

The traffic during peak hours was abnormally high. It took them nearly half an hour in order to drive out of the main road.

Seeing the road ahead becoming more spacious and isolated, Chen Xiaolian checked the road signs and determined that this path would lead them to the outskirts of Hangzhou, Qianjiang.

They are moving through the side of the river?

The cab driver's skill was clearly good. The cab hung at the back, neither too near nor too far away.

After over ten minutes... Chen Xiaolian remained hesitant on whether

or not he should give Qiao Qiao a call.

If the only thing he saw was that someone was tailing her father, he would have made the call long ago.

However... he had accidentally found out that Qiao Qiao's father was sugar daddying a young girl. Talking about something like that would be awkward.

As Chen Xiaolian was hesitating, something unexpected happened!

The Volkswagen abruptly charged forward!

It abruptly sped forward and changed its course, overtaking the black coloured sedan through the side. Following that, a loud braking sound could be heard!

The Volkswagen came to a halt in front, placing itself in the middle of the road.

The black coloured sedan braked but still smashed into the body of the white coloured Volkswagen!

With a loud bang, the sedan skidded forward through a distance of over ten meters before stopping. By then, the hood of the black coloured sedan had been deformed and forced up!

Chen Xiaolian cried out in shock. He quickly had the cab driver stop the cab by the side of the road before pulling open the door and rushing out.

The door to the first passenger seat was forced open and the man in black quickly jumped out. He then moved to open the back door; he pulled out Qiao Qiao's father and Yu Jiajia.

There was a fairly calm expression on Qiao Qiao's father as he pulled Yu Jiajia onto the road.

The chauffeur for the black coloured sedan lay unconscious upon the steering wheel, not moving at all.

It was at that moment...

The doors to the white coloured Volkswagen burst open!

The doors that were deformed as a result of the earlier collision flew outward.

The sound of twisting metal was emitted from the durable doors of the Volkswagen.

Four muscular men got out of the Volkswagen at the same time. Chen Xiaolian was able to note that these four men were obviously no ordinary people!

That was especially true for the two on the other side of the Volkswagen. After getting out of the vehicle, they vaulted over the Volkswagen and landed on the other side.

The man in the lead was a burly looking man, who suddenly broke into a run. Then, he delivered a kick onto the front part of the black coloured sedan! With a boom, the black coloured sedan was sent skidding away.

The man in black quickly ran forward and leapt through the air. The sedan skidded across the ground beneath him.

Then, the man in black descended, his elbow striking downward!

The burly man raised his arm to block it. A thud was heard and he staggered, one leg going down to the ground. His knee slammed down onto the ground, causing a crack to appear.

The man in black's attack made contact. However, another fellow quickly rushed forward to execute a roundhouse kick aimed at the man in black's back. The kick forced him backward.

The burly man took the opportunity to jump up, a short knife appearing in his hand. The blade of the knife shone out in the middle of the night!

The man in black took two steps back as the light emanating from the knife flashed across his face.

The man in black went into a bare-handed stance meant to seize the knife. After an exchange, he easily grabbed onto the other party's knife holding wrist. Taking advantage of the momentum, the man in black stepped forward and turned his body, forcing the burly man's body to slid

through his hand. Then, with a flick of his wrist, the man in black forced the other party to let go of the knife.

Soon after, another person pulled out a gun and fired out two shots at the man in black!

In the darkness of the night, Yu Jiajia's terrified screams rang out through the night skies.

The man in black was struck by the two shots and he staggered. However, he did not fall! He then broke into a run and slammed into the other party's chest, his knee striking that man's lower abdomen area. At the same time, he disarmed the man and sent a fist flying toward the man's face! The man's nose was instantly dented inward!

Everything happened within the span of a few seconds, leaving Chen Xiaolian gaping.

A conclusion came to mind.

These were no ordinary people!

Those assassins who were riding in the Volkswagen were no ordinary people!

How could ordinary people send the doors of a car flying with a kick? How could an ordinary people cause a crack to appear on the ground when their knee slammed onto the ground?

While Chen Xiaolian was staring dumbly at the spectacle, the other two assassins had pounced toward Qiao Qiao's father!

The man in black was obviously being held down and could only watch as the two fellows charged toward his employer. Turning around, he howled and kicked the knife that was left lying on the ground.

The short knife shot forward, flying toward the central back area of one of the assassins. The fellow spat out a muffled groan and fell onto the ground.

Unfortunately, before the man in black could run forward, the burly man roared and used both hands to hold onto him!

The man in black exerted all his might to extricate himself and the creaking sound of bones could be heard. He abruptly flipped backward, slamming violently onto the ground!

Beneath him, a spurt of blood was ejected from the burly man's mouth. However, the man stubbornly clung onto him, refusing to let go.

One of the assassins had arrived before Qiao Qiao's father!

The assassin reached out his hand to grab Father Qiao's wrist, but...

A hand suddenly appeared, grabbing onto his wrist instead!

The assassin turned his head and saw a fair faced teenager looking back at him.

Chen Xiaolian flicked his hand and the assassin was sent flying. However, the assassin made a somersault in the air and landed on his feet.

Chen Xiaolian's mind became troubled.

His strength was now at [B+] class!

Yet, the assassin only looked at Chen Xiaolian with a cold gaze. The assassin abruptly waved both his hands and two scimitars appeared within his hands! Those scimitars appeared... familiar?

Chen Xiaolian no longer has any other weapons. His Bone Crusher Axe had been destroyed and his only other weapon, Snow Edge had been given to Xia Xiaolei...

Hesitating for a moment, Chen Xiaolian quickly turned around to pick up a trashcan from the roadside. His hand pressed down on it and the base of the trashcan was instantly compressed!

Holding the metal trashcan in his hand, he leapt toward the assassin.

The assassin brandished both his scimitars and two "cha" sounds rang out. Chen Xiaolian retreated and felt nothing on his hands. The two sides of the trashcan had been slashed off.

The trashcan was too easily cut through!

Chen Xiaolian then turned around and ran toward the sedan. He then tore out one of the doors of the sedan.

This huge object could be used to smash others and could also serve as a shield.

With the door in hand, Chen Xiaolian stepped forward once more and fought against the assassin.

Keng! Keng!

Two slashes struck onto the surface of the door and Chen Xiaolian could feel that the other party's strength was very strong. It was in no way inferior to his!

Moreover... the other party's speed was far higher than he had expected.

It was then...

Keng! Cha!

Another slash descended and Chen Xiaolian felt his hands becoming lighter. He then saw that the door had been cut into two!

The slash had nearly reached Chen Xiaolian's chest! If he had been one step closer, blood would likely have been shed.

"Son of a bitch!"

Chen Xiaolian shouted furiously.

At that moment, he also received a surprising notification.

[System prompt: The enemy is utilizing Snow Edge, Break skill triggered! Sustainable duration: 5 seconds.]

System?!

Chen Xiaolian raised his head to look at the other party and at the scimitars in his hand.

Snow Edge?

System?

Awakened?

Chen Xiaolian no longer hesitated!

He instantly summoned out his Four-Eyed War Cat!

A beam of white light flashed out and Garfield's mighty form appeared before him. Moreover, there were three of him!

The other party's face immediately turned pale. He stared at Garfield momentarily and abruptly uttered with a hoarse voice. "Bastard! [A] class pet?"

The assassin quickly backed off, both his hands still holding onto the scimitars. He shouted. "Some bastard is using [A] class powers! We need to hurry up and leave this place!"

The man in black had already gotten up. He rushed toward Qiao Qiao's father. As for the burly man, he staggered up and forced himself to retreat.

The two sides quickly split apart. The dual wielding assassin propped up the burly man while the fellow who had used the gun earlier carried the fellow with the knife sticking out from his back.

"Idiot! You lackey! You will die!"

The scimitar-wielding assassin snorted and a car suddenly appeared before him!

Chen Xiaolian was certain that the assassin must have prepared the car within a storage equipment. The four assassins quickly got inside the car and they sped away.

It was then that the man in black walked over. He pulled open the car to the driver's seat and tossed the unconscious chauffeur onto the side of the road.

"Mr. Qiao! Hurry up and enter the car, we need to leave this place immediately! There may be more than one wave of assassins!"

Qiao Qiao's father looked at Chen Xiaolian with a complicated expression. "You..."

At present, Chen Xiaolian himself was feeling flustered. As he looked at Qiao Qiao's father, there was only confusion in his mind.

The man in black walked over and brought with him the terrified and crying Yu Jiajia. He pushed her toward Chen Xiaolian. "Please take care of her for a moment! I need to bring Mr. Qiao away as soon as possible! Their objective is him!"

"Eh? I..."

The man in black did not give Chen Xiaolian any chance to reply. He simply pulled Qiao Qiao's father away and led him into the car. Then, he hopped onto the driver's seat.

Although the front side of the car had been deformed, it was still capable of starting up. Soon, the car was running again and it sped away in another direction.

Chen Xiaolian simply stood right there, his hand clutching onto Yu Jiajia's hand. Looking at her, he saw that she had been scared senseless.

Qiao Qiao's father?

Awakened ones' assassination?

And...

At that moment however...

A reddish orange glow abruptly flashed through the night sky...

Chen Xiaolian hastily turned his head and saw...

BOOM!

A loud explosion resonated outward!

A huge orange coloured fireball soared up into the skies!

It was the black coloured sedan carrying Qiao Qiao's father!

The sedan was blown up into the air and it flipped around in the skies twice, the body of the vehicle transforming into a huge fireball. Then, it smashed onto the ground.

...

On a tall building beside the road, a fellow in all black attire placed down a uniquely shaped longbow and coldly said. "Task complete! I am leaving now."

...

"Dea... dead?" Chen Xiaolian was utterly dumbfounded.

Qiao Qiao's father... died?

He died before my very eyes?

He was directly killed while inside the sedan? His body had become part of the sedan and is now a pile of scrap metal?

The distant fires raged on as Chen Xiaolian stood rooted to the spot.

Yu Jiajia, who was standing beside him made no noise. Instead, her eyelids fluttered and she fainted.

Chen Xiaolian bolted forward. Unfortunately, the flames were too strong and he was unable to get close to the burning sedan. The raging flames and thick smoke spread out...

"Damn it!"

Chen Xiaolian could already hear the distant sound of sirens approaching.

He quickly ran back and saw Yu Jiajia who had fainted by the roadside. Carrying her, he quickly ran to the side of the road. He ran into the darkness and soon found himself in an alley.

Within the darkness, Chen Xiaolian did not even bother following any directions. He ran aimlessly and followed whichever path he could find. Whenever he saw a road, he would run forward. Whenever he saw an alley, he would make a turn. Whenever he encountered a wall, he would simply jump over it.

Although he was carrying a person, his body attribute now has a [B+] class Physique. It was capable of supporting him through his half hour of

senseless running. Then, he gradually slowed down.

He felt as though he had run a distance of nearly five to six km.

He was now within another district. Everywhere was brightly lit and bustling shops and restaurants could be seen on both sides.

Feeling terribly confused, Chen Xiaolian found a rundown motel and entered.

The owner observed him carrying a girl with him but said nothing. Chen Xiaolian handed over several hundred yuans and the owner tossed out a key from the back of the counter. After that, the owner lowered his head to continue playing with his mobile phone. He mumbled. "Girls these days. Drinking themselves into stupor only to get messed around with by others. Serves them right..."

...

Chen Xiaolian carried Yu Jiajia upstairs and into the room, then he placed her onto the bed.

The room was shabby and Chen Xiaolian did not turn on the lights. Instead, he drew the curtains and looked outside.

There was nothing unusual out in the streets. No police cars, no sirens. Everything appeared to be proceeding normally.

It was likely due to the fact that the incident had occurred too far away. Even if police officers arrived at the scene, they would not search up to here.

Chen Xiaolian bit his lips and produced his mobile phone. Taking a deep breath, he forced himself to calm down.

He called up Qiao Qiao.

Qiao Qiao's father had died!

And he watched him die!

No matter what, this was something he had to tell her.

"Hello? Xiaolian?"

From across the phone, Qiao Qiao spoke with a relaxed tone. Carrying a trace of laughter, she then murmured. "Why did you suddenly decide to call me?"

"En..." Chen Xiaolian sighed and tried to find the right words to say.

"Is everything going well? Have you met up with Han Bi?"

"Qiao Qiao, something happened," Chen Xiaolian hesitated. "Where are you now?"

"Me? I am at home," Qiao Qiao detected something wrong with Chen Xiaolian's voice. "What is it?"

"You... you should sit down first. Calm down. There is something I need to tell you. You... you need to mentally prepare yourself. En..."

Qiao Qiao's side became silent for a moment. "... what is it? What happened?"

"Today, I..." Just as those two words left Chen Xiaolian's mouth, a prompt was suddenly issued out from his mobile phone. Someone was calling him.

His mobile phone has the call waiting feature.

Checking the incoming call, Chen Xiaolian became shocked.

This number?!

He quickly said. "Qiao Qiao, wait a moment!"

Without waiting for Qiao Qiao's response, Chen Xiaolian immediately switched calls.

"Hello?" Chen Xiaolian said with a nervous voice.

"Chen Xiaolian?" The voice coming out of the phone sounded exhausted. "I think we should meet up once more! Right now!"

The voice belonged to Qiao Qiao's father!

"You... did not die?"

"The address is XXXX. Hurry over and bring Yu Jiajia with you."

The call ended.

Chen Xiaolian held onto the phone for a good ten seconds before quickly recollecting himself. He switched calls back to Qiao Qiao's phone. "Ah, there is no more problem! I will call you back later!"

"Wha... what? Chen Xiaolian? What exactly is going on? Hello? Hello?"

Chen Xiaolian quickly ended the call and picked Yu Jiajia up from the bed. Carrying her, he quickly exited the motel.

The owner of the motel who was sitting behind the counter saw Chen Xiaolian coming out together with the girl after only several minutes and he pursed his lips to the side.

"Youngsters these days. They only look good but are useless. It has only been how long? A mini whirlwind on the bed..." [1]

...

—

1 'A mini whirlwind on the bed, incapable of lasting more than one minute' is a phrase from a movie, Perfect Exchange, starring Andy Lau and Leung Ka Fai.

Chapter 162: Pension

Chen Xiaolian headed to the street to flag down a cab and had it move toward the designated location.

He even had the cab driver circle around through some other roads to head toward the spot where the earlier incident had occurred.

The spot where the incident occurred was extremely quiet. There was no burning sedan, ruins, blood or charred areas...

Under the illumination provided by the two street lamps, everything appeared normal and the spot was still.

The scene caused Chen Xiaolian to become shocked. However, he soon realized that this was to be expected.

He recalled the incident with the train and how the system had refreshed everything, erasing all traces of the incident... [1]

Chen Xiaolian sighed and said to the cab driver. "Mr, head to this address, XXXX.

...

The location of the new address was at the edge of Qianjiang.

Beside an artificial pier were two rows of outdoor barbeque restaurants. Naturally, since it was presently winter, the barbeque restaurants' business were conducted indoors.

A ship was docked in the pier. It was the type meant for inland rivers and not the type for travelling through the seas.

Chen Xiaolian carried Yu Jiajia up to the pier and saw the man in black standing in front of the pier. His pair of eyes shone through the darkness like two clumps of flames.

When Chen Xiaolian walked over, the man in black gave him a nod before retrieving Yu Jiajia from him.

"The boss is waiting for you inside."

Chen Xiaolian inhaled a breath and slowly walked into the ship.

...

A cabin door was pushed open.

It was apparent that the cabin had been modified. The interior of the cabin was very big and a thick carpet covered the floor. The walls were outfitted with a layer of wood and a strong scent of smoke could be made out.

Qiao Qiao's father was sitting on a sofa while puffing on a cigar – his bearing was similar to when they had met each other for the first time two hours earlier.

This time though, Qiao Qiao's father was not fully clothed. He was only wearing a trench coat over his body; a thick layer of bandage had been applied over his chest and shoulders.

Chen Xiaolian entered and the two of them stared at each other for a full five seconds. Qiao Qiao's father suddenly let out a sigh before pointing at a nearby sofa. "Come on over and sit."

His face was pale and his expression revealed exhaustion.

Chen Xiaolian silently moved over and sat down. Then, he looked at Qiao Qiao's father.

Qiao Qiao's father smiled wryly. "It would appear that we will need to discuss things through once more. Hmm... or more accurately, we will need to get to know each other once more."

After saying that, he suddenly stood up and extended his right hand. "Qiao Yifeng."

Chen Xiaolian quickly stood up and used both hands to accept Qiao Yifeng's extended right hand.

After shaking his hand, Qiao Yifeng waved his hand and said. "Be seated."

The both of them sat down once more and Qiao Yifeng placed a complicated gaze upon Chen Xiaolian. "Truth be told, I need to thank you

for earlier. You saved me once.”

“That is not quite true,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. He understood that he had only rendered a minor help back then. In the end, Qiao Yifeng ‘died’ due to the car explosion. When that happened, he was unable to help at all.

“The fact that you stepped forward for my sake meant that you have helped me out,” Qiao Yifeng shook his head. “I can distinguish kindness and enmity.”

He then turned his gaze onto Chen Xiaolian again. “You are an Awakened?”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He simply nodded his head – naturally, he would never volunteer to say that he was not an Awakened and was instead, an Irregularity... that was something that needed to be kept a secret.

“When did you become an Awakened?”

“Not too long ago. I have only participated in a few instance dungeons,” Chen Xiaolian did not lie. He also did not try to show off. He simply stated the truth.

“I have two questions I need to ask you. I hope that you can answer those questions honestly,” Qiao Yifeng’s gaze was like a bolt of electricity as he kept them directed at Chen Xiaolian.

“... all right, I will do my best to answer them,” Chen Xiaolian had no desire to die.

“The first question: back then, why did you follow my car?”

Chen Xiaolian smiled. “When I got out of the hotel earlier, I bumped into an acquaintance of mine. Then, I saw your car leaving. However, I discovered the Volkswagen tailing you. I felt that something might not be right and I decided to follow just in case – at any rate, you are Qiao Qiao’s father. If there was any problem, I might be able to help out. That was my line of thought back then.”

“Very well,” Qiao Yifeng nodded his head.

Then, his expression suddenly turned grim as he stared at Chen Xiaolian. The gaze contained a profound sense of pressure and momentum. However, Chen Xiaolian noticed that within those eyes was a trace of... fear?

“The second question: you being an Awakened... all those things... does Qiao Qiao know?”

After putting forward the question, Qiao Yifeng stared firmly into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes, as if he was hoping for a certain answer.

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “Considering your intellect, you should already have guessed it, haven’t you?”

Qiao Yifeng’s body trembled!

He suddenly appeared much older, as though he had suddenly aged a few more years. A dazed look appeared on his face. “That is right, that is right... Qiao Qiao’s standards have always been high. She would not possibly like someone casually... for her to notice you and be together with you, it must mean that you are different. You are someone who possesses a power that surpasses the norm... perhaps, because there is a common ground between you two...”

At the end of his words, Qiao Yifeng whispered. “She... is also an Awakened?”

Chen Xiaolian simply sighed. “Not just her... Soo Soo as well.”

The old man’s body trembled yet again.

His demeanour collapsed. “So it is... so it is... it seems, this is Heaven’s will... Heaven’s will!”

“More accurately, there is no Heaven’s will,” Chen Xiaolian gave a bitter smile. “Perhaps this is simply how the setting is.”

“Qiao Qiao... when did she get sucked into it?”

Chen Xiaolian did not hide much of what happened and retold what happened to Soo Soo and Qiao Qiao and how they were sucked into this

world. He selected the parts that he could talk about and narrated them.

The old man's eyes gradually grew dark.

Chen Xiaolian observed his face and slowly asked. "So, about your identity... are you also an Awakened?"

"Awakened?" Qiao Yifeng smiled bitterly and answered. "Let me show you something."

"Eh?"

Qiao Yifeng produced a mobile phone and slowly opened up a video.

...

The video was very short and was only around three minutes.

Within the video was Qiao Yifeng himself – however, it appeared that he was at least 30 years younger or more...

He appeared to be a man in his youth and was wearing a peculiar looking vest.

Chen Xiaolian recognized the vest. It was a protective suit.

In Qiao Yifeng's hand was a rifle that screamed sci-fi and he bit onto a cigar. He looked at the screen and spoke loudly. "What are you filming? There is nothing to film here!"

A voice came over from the side of the screen, likely belonging to the person filming this video. "Bro Qiao, congratulations on completing your first instance dungeon. You have now officially graduated from the rookie stage! Ha ha ha ha... next up is our coming of age gift to you!"

Qiao Yifeng retorted. "Nonsense! I came of age a long time ago!"

"Ha ha ha ha, this is to congratulate you on becoming a true Awakened who have graduated from the rookie stage!" The voice coming over from the screen was very rough. "Guild Leader knows that you like beauties, so he personally selected a high-class beauty for you! Ha ha ha ha! You can slowly enjoy it!"

From the side of the screen, a hand was stretched out. Chen Xiaolian

noted that it was the left hand. Additionally, the ring finger on the hand was missing one section.

The hand passed a key over to the young Qiao Yifeng. "It is the XXX hotel, room XXXX! Hurry over! Guild Leader is being extremely generous. He found you an American movie star. It was no cheap matter, ha ha ha ha ha..."

The young Qiao Yifeng accepted the key and appeared embarrassed. However, the hand quickly grabbed onto a bottle of champagne and poured its contents down young Qiao Yifeng's head. Instantly, a string of curses and a riot of lively sounds broke out from the video...

The video came to an end.

...

Chen Xiaolian looked at Qiao Yifeng's face and looked back at the mobile phone. "I... don't think I understand."

"I have several more videos that are quite similar," Qiao Yifeng softly said. "Those were all taken back when I was young."

"So... you really are an Awakened," Chen Xiaolian slowly spoke up.

"Not exactly," Qiao Yifeng laughed. It was an odd laugh. "Do you know... many years ago... one day, someone appeared before me and showed me these videos. He told me that I used to be one of them..."

"Yet, the most ridiculous part of it all..."

"The man inside the video is obviously me. However, back then, I had absolutely no memories of those things! None at all! Not a single scrap!"

Chen Xiaolian became shocked.

"Inside those videos, I would be laughing, throwing a ruckus, making jokes with others, fooling around and even messing about with females... but when I saw those videos, I felt as though I had seen a ghost! I could not remember doing those things at all!" Qiao Yifeng's eyes became slightly hazy.

Chen Xiaolian was speechless. Then, he uttered. "I get it! You were once

an Awakened... however, you died in battle and was refreshed back to become an ordinary person.”

Qiao Yifeng looked sadly at Chen Xiaolian. Then, he exhaled softly. “You are correct... the person who showed me these videos had said the same thing.”

Next, Qiao Yifeng narrated a story for Chen Xiaolian.

...

There was once a young man called Qiao Yifeng, In his younger years, a man suddenly came to meet him and told him that part of his memories has been erased or rather, replaced.

A former Awakened who died in battle, he was refreshed back into a normal human.

Later on, his former comrades went to find him and informed him of these memories.

The Awakened Qiao Yifeng had once joined a guild.

Back then, the guild was not too big. However, the guild’s battle strength was clearly extraordinary. Additionally, it was a guild with an extreme level of solidarity. The members were like brothers through life and death.

More accurately, they were indeed brothers through life and death.

“I was once a soldier,” Qiao Yifeng mentioned softly. “My Awakened comrades are all my comrade-in-arms from the time when I was in the army. One day, something unexpected occurred and our entire squadron was sucked into an instance dungeon as Awakened ones.”

...

Just think about it. A squad of soldiers that had gone through the rigorous training meant for the military was sent into an instance dungeon. Even if they were only rookies, the combat prowess that these people exhibited would certainly exceed those of average rookies!

Thus, this group of Awakened ones immediately stood out from the rest,

becoming veteran Awakened ones.

They came together to form their own guild and resolved to brave life and death together. United, they shall forge out a future for themselves!

However... in one instance dungeon, Qiao Yifeng was killed in action.

In the period of time after his death, the guild continued participating in the instance dungeons while Qiao Yifeng was refreshed to become an ordinary young man. And so, he went on with his life in this world.

It was at this time that things changed.

The guild gradually expanded and they came to the same decision as Chen Xiaolian. They felt the need for their own base of operations within this world. Rather, they required an enterprise of sorts.

That was because the strength of their guild had become extremely extraordinary. Thus, the blueprint for their plans was much bigger than Chen Xiaolian's.

For that sake, they would require a substantial amount of financial power, resources, connections... etc.

Theoretically speaking, Awakened ones were existences who need not be concerned with money. However, while it was easy to acquire small amounts of money, the same could not be said about large amounts of money.

In the end, they simply could not pull out the weapons they acquired from the system to clean out the Federal Reserve's vault.

Doing so would end up breaking the world's setting, incurring punishment from the system.

Additionally, to get an enterprise going, they would require someone in charge of it.

Placing an Awakened in that position was not an option. They were people who will have to participate in instance dungeons at any given moment and could die on that very same day. Moreover, majority of their efforts had to be directed toward enhancing themselves and the studies

regarding battle tactics when entering instance dungeons.

Thus, after much deliberation, they thought of a suitable person.

Qiao Yifeng.

A former comrade-in-arms who had been refreshed into an ordinary person.

They were familiar with Qiao Yifeng's character and aware of his ability.

But above all else... they trust Qiao Yifeng! These people who had undergone the baptism of war in the battlefield could only place their trust in a comrade-in-arms who had fought alongside them!

Thus, one of them came to meet up with Qiao Yifeng.

And thus, a legend was born.

...

Back then, the young Qiao Yifeng was at a loss on how to react.

The initial phase of bewilderment, confusion, internal struggles... he went through all those emotions and more.

In the end, he chose to believe in them.

First, the person who came to meet him and showed him the video was someone he knew, a former comrade-in-arms from his soldiering days. Naturally, those days of fighting as Awakened ones were no more. Only the memories of them being soldiers before becoming Awakened ones were left. Qiao Yifeng believed that his comrade-in-arms would not deceive him.

Second... even if he still had any doubts, once that person displayed superhuman abilities capable of throwing the world upside down before him, whatever doubts he may have had vanished there and then.

Third... back then, Qiao Yifeng was still young. He had yet to have a family or any mouths to feed. He also did not have the desire for a stable life yet. He was a youthful young man who had once been a soldier,

brimming with the ambition to accomplish something grand.

Therefore, a legend was born. A legend named Qiao Yifeng.

Just imagine, even if Qiao Yifeng was only an ordinary person... in his shadows lay a group of Awakened ones! In the eyes of this world, these Awakened ones were no different from a squad of Supermen!

Although they were many cases in which they cannot appear directly, all they had to do was to quietly give Qiao Yifeng some help from the side...

For this young entrepreneur, it was the equivalent of having acquired a cheat program! In the span of merely a few years, he experienced a meteoric rise!

With the cheat like help provided by these Supermen, earning money became a very simple matter.

One such example was in the area of capital markets. He only needed to know what plans were being concocted by the financial predators, details on how they plan on manipulating certain stock prices or funds... then, all that was left to do was to jump on the bandwagon.

There were countless ways to earn money!

It was as though God Himself was helping Qiao Yifeng!

In merely a few decades, he became one of the world's wealthiest men with a powerful financial base, authority and network of connections.

However, it was more accurate to say that all of those belonged to the guild.

As for Qiao Yifeng, he was their representative, a manager.

Their relationship was a close and secretive one. On one hand, they were once comrade-in-arms with a deep bond of friendship. On the other hand, both sides need not worry about getting betrayed by the other.

Awakened ones do not require much money to get by... secular authority and pleasure meant little to them... because there was always the possibility of them dying within an instance dungeon, causing their

memories to be erased.

Qiao Yifeng on the other hand would not betray them as well... or rather, he simply did not have the ability to betray them. Regardless of who it may be, in face of this group of superhumans... he will have no chance or room to betray them.

Additionally, after Qiao Yifeng amassed such a huge amount of asset, his guild gave him a funny nickname.

“Pension.”

Qiao Yifeng smiled softly. “Awakened ones will eventually die. After their deaths, they will be refreshed to become an ordinary person. They will become someone with no power or influence, becoming an existence akin to weed among the lowest layer within society. For any Awakened ones who had once wielded powers capable of summoning a storm, this conclusion was a truly miserable one!

“Just like the me from back then... even though I could no longer recall my days as an Awakened, the me after being refreshed, without their help, I would be no different than a weed.

“Thus, we came to an agreement. Regardless of which member it was, if they were to die and be refreshed as an ordinary human... after becoming an ordinary human, they will get to enjoy part of this wealth! This will ensure that after becoming an ordinary person, that person will be able to live a good and prosperous life! And not have to live like a wretched dog!”

Pausing, Qiao Yifeng laughed. “Simply put, I am their financial manager, the one in charge of their ‘pension funds’.”

In addition, that wealth also served other purposes.

As mentioned earlier, following the growth of the guild, they quietly founded several secret military bases around the world.

There were even some training sites!

They even started plans to nurture talents to become their successors... after recruiting those newly Awakened rookies, they could send those

rookies to their secret bases for intensive training when the rookies were not participating in instance dungeons.

This would ensure a steady stream of forces for the guild.

...

Hearing about that part, Chen Xiaolian could not restrain himself and let out a sigh. "This enterprise of yours is done on such a professional level... compared to you, we are just a group of amateurs."

"Not everything would proceed smoothly," Qiao Yifeng slowly said. "Take tonight's incident for example, you saw what happened with your own eyes."

Chen Xiaolian's face turned solemn and he asked. "Those trying to assassinate you... are Awakened ones? Who are they?"

"Another group, another guild."

Qiao Yifeng pursed his lips to the side and answered. "Truth be told, guilds that are relatively powerful or smart would do something similar. They would set up agents within the secular world to help the guild gather wealth and build an enterprise for them.

"The world may be huge, but this world is small.

"Additionally, there would be friendship and hatred among guilds.

"You and I have battled each other inside an instance dungeon before. Now that we are back in this world, our hatred continues! I will go destroy your enterprise and assassinate your agents. At any rate, it involves causing issues for the other party.

"Naturally, it is sometimes purely due to business conflicts – generally speaking, guilds will not get into conflicts with one another due to some secular business matters. Money in this world holds little meaning to them. However, should that business conflict affect the development of my enterprise... then actions will need to be taken.

"The assassination attempt on me tonight is due one of those two reasons. Furthermore, this is not the first time I have encountered

something like this. Naturally, this will not be the last.

“They sent someone to protect me. That bodyguard by my side is an Awakened, a young man with exceptional strength. I have several bodyguards. This time, it was his turn to protect me. Awakened ones have the need to participate in instance dungeons, making it impossible for them to always be by my side. Thus, the bodyguards protecting me do so on a rotation basis.”

“So, the people involved in this time’s assassination...”

“At present, I still cannot be certain. I can think of two possibilities. First, I had recently engaged in a very large-scale business. That business may have caused a conflict of interest with another guild. Thus, they sent someone to assassinate me. Second... I will need to go ask them. Perhaps they incurred someone’s wrath when they were participating in an instance dungeon, causing the other party to place the resentment on me. No matter, these things would quickly come to light once the investigation begins. It won’t take long.”

After saying that, Qiao Yifeng looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Tonight, the only source of surprise for me, was you! Chen Xiaolian! To think that you would be an Awakened... additionally, even my daughters...”

As he spoke, Qiao Yifeng suddenly pulled off the trench coat. Next, he slowly removed the bandage wrapping over his body.

After he finished unrolling the last of the bandages, it was revealed that the wounds on his body had been healed. The only thing remaining was a minor scar – however, a scar that minor would disappear in the near future.

Chen Xiaolian noted that Qiao Yifeng’s body was extremely robust. Considering his age, his body had no fat upon them. His body exhibited sturdiness and the outline of his muscles could clearly be defined.

Chen Xiaolian was willing to bet that those Awakened ones must have given him some medicinal substances from the system to enhance his body.

Additionally... the damage he took from the explosion earlier must have been significant!

They must have given him Healing Beast Bloods, furthermore, it might even be of the high class type!

Chen Xiaolian also noted...

Although Qiao Yifeng had told him much...

Many key points were not disclosed.

For example, the organization that Qiao Yifeng belonged to... which guild was it?

The names of the people involved, the name of the guild, none of those were said.

He was still being very cautious.

—

Qiao Yifeng. Raw: ‘乔逸峰’, pinyin: ‘qiáo yì fēng’. ‘qiáo’ means tall, ‘yì’ means escape, ‘fēng’ means peak.

Chapter 163: You Are Alive, That Is Good

Qiao Yifeng no longer had anything to say to Chen Xiaolian.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he was able to make a rough estimate regarding what was going on in Qiao Yifeng's mind. For one, this was about giving an explanation for the unexpected event that had occurred earlier. Qiao Yifeng expressed his thanks and at the same time, inquired some important matters from Chen Xiaolian.

After all, there was a huge difference between his daughter having a relationship with an ordinary brat and having a relationship with an Awakened who might die at any moment.

Qiao Yifeng no longer said anything regarding the relationship between Chen Xiaolian and Qiao Qiao – he no longer expressed any words of objection. However, from what Chen Xiaolian could observe, Qiao Yifeng's expression and tone of words indicated that things were not so optimistic.

It was possible that Qiao Yifeng's objection toward their relationship would intensify. That was very likely.

Sure enough, Qiao Yifeng entered a state of silence, seemingly having nothing left to say. Chen Xiaolian straightened himself and said that he would leave first if there were nothing else at hand.

"That may be for the best," Qiao Yifeng pondered about it and straightened himself as well. Then, he personally escorted Chen Xiaolian out of the cabin.

The night wind blew across the surface of the pier. Wearing the trench coat, Qiao Yifeng stood before Chen Xiaolian.

"I have some other matters to attend to for today. However, I think that we will still need to meet up once more. There are some things that needed to be discussed thoroughly," Qiao Yifeng spoke with a calm tone.

Chen Xiaolian could not restrain himself and he asked. "You... you still want me to break up with Qiao Qiao?"

“If you are the only one with the identity of an Awakened while Qiao Qiao is an ordinary person, I would have you two break up even at the cost of my life,” Qiao Qiao said coolly. “No parent would want their child to be together with someone like you. It is too dangerous; there is no guarantee that nothing bad will happen.”

“So now...” Chen Xiaolian’s heart skipped a beat.

“I will have to reconsider the matter,” Qiao Yifeng shook his head. “Unfortunately... Qiao Qiao is also an Awakened. That factor is more important compared to your relationship with her.”

Chen Xiaolian was able to understand. For Qiao Yifeng, the most important matter that he had to consider was how to ensure his daughter’s safety – matters such as relationships could simply be tossed aside.

“About tonight’s incident, do not tell Qiao Qiao,” Qiao Yifeng thought about it. “I hope you can cooperate. This is something that requires a discussion between us father and daughter.”

“I understand,” Chen Xiaolian expressed his agreement.

“Then this is goodbye. In a few days’ time, we will meet again... after I have a discussion with Qiao Qiao,” Qiao Yifeng said. Then, he extended his right hand.

After the two of them shook hands, Chen Xiaolian walked out of the pier and onto the side of the road.

...

The ship slowly left the dock. Qiao Yifeng sat inside the cabin near the window.

Yu Jiajia woke up and saw Qiao Yifeng and the man in black beside her. Her eyes revealed confusion before becoming surprised. She exclaimed. “Ah, you... you are still alive...”

The man in black retrieved a pen like object from his chest and looked at the time before slowly rotating the scale on top two and a half times.

Then, he moved to face Yu Jiajia. "Jiajia, please look over here."

A flash of light erupted and Yu Jiajia's pupil abruptly shrank before widening again. Then, she fainted.

In but half a minute, Yu Jiajia woke up again.

With a bleary-eyed expression, she rubbed her eyes and looked around at the cabin. Then, she revealed a look of surprise. Turning around, she looked at Qiao Yifeng, who was wearing a trench coat and smiled sheepishly. "I... did I fall asleep again?"

The man in black gave a faint smile. "Miss Jiajia is probably feeling tired. You fell asleep the moment you got on the car. I brought you in here."

"Maybe you have had a tiring day?" Qiao Yifeng had a light smile on his face as he looked at Yu Jiajia.

"Is that so..." Yu Jiajia wore a dazed expression for a moment. Then, she mused. "In school today, I encountered a really weird fellow..."

...

Chen Xiaolian walked along the street for half an hour before stopping. Then, he waved down a cab.

After half an hour, Chen Xiaolian got off the cab. He was back at the residential complex that Han Bi lived in.

Easily vaulting over the walls of the residential complex, Chen Xiaolian then moved toward Han Bi's residence.

Pressing the doorbell, he found that no one was answering.

He raised his head and peered up at the window of Han Bi's room. It was dark, seemingly indicating that no one was living inside.

He did not give up.

He waited there patiently for a long time. When night arrived, Chen Xiaolian looked around and watched as the lights of the other residential buildings go off one after another. Then, he began climbing up the

building's outer walls.

Due to the many platform railing for air conditioning units available, Chen Xiaolian who possessed a [B+] Physique did not face much difficulty. What he needed to be careful of was to not let this act of his be caught by mobile phones of ordinary people. Then, he will unwittingly be mistaken as Spiderman and have the video uploaded onto the net.

Chen Xiaolian had been careful and he chose to wear a cap and a mouth muffle as he climbed up.

The window to Han Bi's room was locked. Chen Xiaolian simply broke a small hole through the window and proceeded to open the window. Then, he slipped inside.

He entered a kitchen.

Chen Xiaolian landed lightly.

Amid the darkness, he saw that the kitchen was very clean. Not a trace of soot could be seen.

He then touched the sink and found that it was very dry. There were no watermarks at all – that meant that it had not seen any use for quite some time.

The furniture inside the living room were simplistic in nature. Most importantly, there was a light layer of dust upon them.

Due to them living in a big city, the air quality was not too good. For any normal household, some dust will build up if the house was not cleaned once every few days. Additionally, Han Bi's residential building was located close to the main road and was more exposed toward the exhaust gas from automobiles.

As expected, the apartment was empty.

Two rooms, a master bedroom and a study.

The one thing that surprised Chen Xiaolian was that Han Bi lived alone and not with his parents.

Opening the closet, he found them to be partially empty. It was clear

that many of the clothes there had been taken away.

In the study room, there was a desktop. However, there was no laptop... Chen Xiaolian recalled seeing Han Bi carrying a laptop with him when they met back in the train.

Some of the food in the fridge had already gone bad, indicating that the owner had been gone for a long time.

From what he could see, Chen Xiaolian concluded that Han Bi had left in a hurry.

Clothes were scattered over the surface of the sofa and the bed. Books were strewn all over the study room. A power bank could be seen left on the floor.

Two of the drawers were left open.

If not for the fact that the door and window was intact, it would seem as though a thief had broken into this apartment.

Chen Xiaolian pondered for a moment. Next, he switched on Han Bi's desktop.

The browsing history for IE had not been deleted. The most recently date of access was two days after the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon concluded. It was the same day Chen Xiaolian left for Japan.

Through the IE browser's history, Chen Xiaolian saw that a booking was made.

Unfortunately, he was unable to find out the destination...

Clearly, after the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon was over, he had returned home. However, he did not stay here for long. He had hastily packed up and moved out.

Chen Xiaolian thought about it, brought out a piece of paper, and wrote a sentence on it. Then, he placed the piece of paper on the living room's table.

"I could not get in touch with you, I am feeling worried. Sorry to enter

your house uninvited. If you still think of me as a friend, please be sure to contact me.”

Below the sentence was: A friend whom you had supported before. [1]

After doing that, Chen Xiaolian sighed and left Han Bi's house.

After walking out of the residential complex, Chen Xiaolian was suddenly visited by a feeling of frustration.

This trip to Hangzhou had left him speechless.

He failed to find the person he was looking for. Instead, he met someone he did not wish to meet.

Qiao Qiao's father, Qiao Yifeng was simply a huge source of trouble.

“After he has his discussion with Qiao Qiao, would he ask her to join the guild that he is part of?” Chen Xiaolian considered the possibility.

Such a possibility was highly likely.

The guild that Qiao Yifeng was part of was clearly a veteran guild; with a level of strength that exceeded his by a hundred times.

For the sake of Qiao Qiao's safety, her father would certainly hope that she become part of a strong guild. By doing so, her chances of survival would be higher. Additionally, Qiao Yifeng would be able to care for her.

Chen Xiaolian felt vexed.

Walking along the main road, Chen Xiaolian looked at the time and saw that it was already midnight. He decided to wait for dawn to arrive before heading home on the earliest train.

There should be a few more hours before the earliest train set to depart after dawn.

How should I spend the next few hours?

Chen Xiaolian was not too familiar with the roads in Hangzhou. Thus, he randomly walked through the streets. Unconsciously, he ended up heading toward Han Bi's school.

Within roughly half an hour, he ended up standing before the entrance

to the school.

“Why did I walk here...” Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly.

Looking at the time, he shrugged it off and decided to find an internet café to spend the rest of the time.

As for going to a hotel to catch some sleep, Chen Xiaolian was not feeling sleepy.

He was also not interested in going to those places of entertainment.

For a student like him, an internet café appeared to be the most familiar place for him.

Additionally... there should be a lot of internet cafes in the vicinity of most schools.

Chen Xiaolian went around the school. After walking through half a street, he found a shabby looking internet café with a cliché name: Speedy Café.

After handing tens of yuans to the manager in charge, he got a spot opened for him and switched on the computer.

In his boredom, he logged into the novel website and saw comments asking for updates and curses filling the novel review section. Suddenly, for some unknown reason – or perhaps it was because the encounters he had experienced through this day and night had not been going according to plan, causing him to feel rebellious instead.

This world has been gradually moving away from the norm... but I will instead do the same thing I did before!

He opened up a document. Then, as he sat in the internet café, he started typing up a novel.

Subconsciously, Chen Xiaolian ended up putting in all the things that he had experienced in the past few days, such as the instance dungeon beneath the island, the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon, the Japan instance dungeon... all the things he experienced were typed into the novel.

The novel that he wrote was originally of the fantasy type. At any rate, the route that the story followed was about defeating monsters to level up. Thus, inserting those messed up subjects inside and giving it a new feel did not seem overly obtrusive.

After two hours, he finished typing out a chapter and uploaded it onto the site.

Feeling suffocated, Chen Xiaolian went to the counter overseen by the manager in charge and bought a pack of cigarettes. Then, he went back to his seat and took a drag.

After finishing one cigarette, Chen Xiaolian suddenly understood why he was in such a bad mood!

He came to realize that he was feeling afraid!

He was afraid...

Afraid of losing Qiao Qiao!

What if Qiao Qiao's father insisted on separating her from him?

What if Qiao Qiao's father insisted on having her join that guild?

After father and daughter had finished their discussion... when Qiao Qiao realizes that her father is a member of that guild... will she be more willing to stay by her father's side and fight alongside him?

Additionally... what is up with myself?

Logically speaking... I should be supporting the act of having her join Qiao Yifeng's guild. Because that would be safer! A big guild with a strong battle strength and great powers will provide her with a higher level of safety. That way, the chances of her surviving will be that much higher.

If I really love her, I should wish her a better...

But...

Humans were selfish beings after all.

Chen Xiaolian felt very distressed.

He shook the mouse in his hand and turned to look at the book review section.

Even though it was late in the night, there were still many night owls around.

Many readers were shocked by the chapter that he had just uploaded!

“Fatty Wu’s corpse is stirring!”

“Old eunuch is coming out of the palace!”

“Bastard! Did you come back to type after spending away all the royalties?”

“Pooh! This senior will now go to pirate sites! I will vex you to death!”

“New chapter is quite good, I have sent in a recommendation ticket, work hard, Fatty Wu~”

“The content seems to have changed. Shouldn’t it supposed to be magic? Why did a mech suddenly pop out? Fatty Wu, are you planning on playing mix and match?”

“New novel advertisement...”

Chen Xiaolian was uncertain what it was he was hoping for as he read the comments popping out inside the book review section.

It seemed like it was only yesterday when he was still doing all these... after experiencing this change in worldview, he was engulfed by a dismal feeling.

“This life... I would likely be unable to return to this life, would I?” Chen Xiaolian snuffed out the cigarette in his hand as he felt his heart suffocating.

It was at that moment that a new comment in the book review section caught his attention.

“Are you Xiaolian, or Fatty Wu?”

The ID was: Aircraft Fanatic Bigmouth Han.

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes suddenly lit up!

This was Han Bi's ID!

He quickly produced his mobile phone and called Han Bi's number.

However, no one answered the phone!

Chen Xiaolian considered it and quickly clicked onto the comment left by Han Bi and typed the following reply.

"Bastard! Why aren't you picking up the phone! Do you know how hard I have been looking for you?"

After sending the reply...

Before Han Bi could answer, the others from the book review section saw it. Countless replies surged inside.

"Holy shit! I saw Big Wu provoking a reader in the middle of the night!"

"Is this a romantic confession?"

"Who is that 'Aircraft Fanatic Bigmouth Han'? Could that be the legendary wife of Bro Wu?"

"Upstairs is an idiot! Would a woman use such a wretched sounding ID?"

"Upstairs is wise! That fellow is definitely a male! Oh, no! Is Fatty Wu coming out of the closet?"

"Big Wu, do not be afraid. We will support you! It does not matter if you are coming out of the closet or if you are going off-track, as long as you do not stop updating, everything will be fine, ha ha ha."

"What nonsense, even if Fatty Wu comes out of the closet, the one he will be with will be a certain San. San Wu couple is king!" [2]

Cold sweat trickled out of Chen Xiaolian as he saw those comments. He was so furious that his nose turned crooked.

Son of a bitch! My nose is turning so crooked, it will reach the vault of the Heavens!

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. Seeing that Han Bi had yet to reply, he sent out another line through private messaging.

“Han Bi, why aren’t you picking up the phone? I am in Hangzhou now, looking for you!”

A while later, after about five minutes, a reply came over.

“I saw you updating with a new chapter and thought ‘Oh, Hell’. I thought that you returned to write novels because you had died and was refreshed back as an ordinary person.”

Chen Xiaolian: “Han Bi, where are you? Let us meet up. About what happened in the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang, I have never blamed you.”

A moment later, Han Bi replied.

“I am sorry. Even if we meet up, I do not know what I should say to you...”

Subsequently, another message was sent over.

“Xiaolian, you did not die, you are alive. That is good! You must live on.”

Their conversation ended with that. Chen Xiaolian sent over several more messages, but got no reply from Han Bi.

Damn it!

Chen Xiaolian slapped down heavily on the surface of the table.

This action of his alarmed the other customers who were inside the adjacent booths. Some raised their head to look over in his direction.

“Is he crazy, pounding the table in the middle of the night.”

“Just leave him alone, he is probably feeling salty after getting his ass handed to him in LoL.”

...

—

1 The sentence in the raw indicates toward Han Bi’s act of ‘supporting’ him up to Hegemon in the novel site.

2 Tang Jia San Shao is a very well-known name in Qidian. Also, the author for this novel is Dancing or Tiaowu. Thus, his readers call him Bro

Wu, Fatty Wu, etc.

Chapter 164: Home

Morning came and Chen Xiaolian felt hungry. However, he did not feel like eating instant noodles. Thus, he chose to leave the internet café and walked outside.

The sky was turning light and some food hawkers, who operated with pushcarts, had started their business.

Chen Xiaolian stood in the street and randomly found a stall and sat down. On the simple, square table with benches, he ordered a bowl of bean curd – oh, he was of the Salt Faction. [1] He also ordered two warm Chinese donuts. Tearing them with his hands, he stuffed them into his mouth and munched down on them.

His current location was not too far from the school's side door, a place that was located within an alley.

A dilapidated metal door located by the side of the school slowly opened up and a thin and short figure shambled out while pushing a garbage cart.

Chen Xiaolian recognized that person. He was the thin and stiff looking fellow that Chen Xiaolian had saved yesterday – ermm, he still did not know that fellow's name.

The fellow parked the garbage cart at the side of the door before raising his head to look around. He moved over, greeted the hawkers, shakily produced a few coins and bought a fried pancake. Then, he walked back toward the door, his head lowered as he munched down on his food.

A black coloured sedan halted before the school entrance and Yu Jiajia alighted from the sedan.

She was still wearing that white coloured wool sweater from yesterday – looking at the bleary expression on her face, Chen Xiaolian determined that this girl must have stayed up all night.

Sigh... it appears that being a sugar baby is not an easy job either.

Chen Xiaolian had no ill feelings toward Yu Jiajia. Looking at the flower

like beauty, he felt rather sorry for her.

After Yu Jiajia got off from the sedan, the sedan drove off. However, Yu Jiajia did not walk into the school through the entrance. Instead, she stood at the entrance and considered something before walking toward the side where the morning hawker stalls were.

Chen Xiaolian quickly lowered his head to eat his food. In his heart, he was hoping that Yu Jiajia would not notice him.

His wish was fulfilled and Yu Jiajia did not walk over to his table. She bought a packet of soymilk and left.

At that instant, two fellows walked out from the internet café located by the side.

The two fellows had the words 'I am a loser' etched on their faces.

Staying up through the night, their complexions were ashen green. Their hairs however, were dyed red and yellow. With a cheap cigarette between their fingers, they walked out, yawning. Out of habit, their shifty eyes darted around.

Naturally, after catching sight of Yu Jiajia, their eyes remain glued onto her.

Yu Jiajia possessed a very good figure. The jeans she was wearing accentuated the beautiful curves of her hips and thighs while the white coloured wool sweater exuded an aura of purity. Moreover, her face was also beautiful...

In the early morning when the sun had yet to rise up, the streets were filled with the colour of greyness and not many people could be seen. For a beautiful girl to appear at a time like this, her existence became something of an inevitable attraction.

The two fellows muttered a few words. Then, they tossed away the cigarette and moved to follow her.

Chen Xiaolian noticed all those happening. He then looked at the half-eaten bean curd before him and gave a sigh.

He could not simply ignore it... even if he was to put aside the relationship between Yu Jiajia and Qiao Yifeng, Yu Jiajia was still one of his hard-core readers, one that had supported him up to Hegemon.

Chen Xiaolian stood up and stretched his waist – I will just take this as an after meal exercise.

...

A sharp scream soon pierced its way out from the alley by the side of the school.

However, due to how short and weak the scream was, the people in the vicinity did not notice it. For Chen Xiaolian on the other hand, his sharp senses allowed him to clearly hear the scream.

He frowned and walked into the alley.

...

Just a glance was sufficient to tell that the two of them were delinquents. They were the bullies in society. Truthfully, they were not thinking too much about it. They had been spending their time inside the internet café for the whole night, wasting away all their money. As of now, the combined amount of money available in their pockets was only enough to buy them a pack of cigarettes.

When they first set their sights on Yu Jiajia, their intention was simply to extort some money from her.

They were currently in the vicinity of a high school. It was apparent that this was not the first time the two fellows had engaged in the act of extorting a student's pocket money. Considering how minor of a crime this was and how hard it was to pursue the criminals, this became one of their sources of income.

They followed Yu Jiajia because they saw that she was alone without any methods of fighting back. In addition, it was currently early in the morning where there was almost no one on the streets.

These two fellows then cornered Yu Jiajia within the alley. However,

when they caught sight of Yu Jiajia's appearance...

They temporarily changed their mind.

When they were in the internet café last night, they must have downloaded and watched a certain type of Japanese movie, resulting in a surge of hormones. After leaving the internet café in the early hours of morning, they then encountered a pleasant looking, delicate beauty. Before them, this beauty was exhibiting an indisputable look of helplessness and terror.

It was clear that their hormones were now driving them.

Not that they would actually commit any outrageous acts within this alley – they do not quite have the courage to commit things like XXXX-ing – though things might be different if this was the middle of the night. However, it was currently morning. Thus, they had some scruples about doing so.

However, they were still very interested in flirting around and copping a feel.

One of the fellows gave Yu Jiajia a hug from behind while grabbing both her arms. The two hormone driven fellows did not even bother to pick up the purse that Yu Jiajia had dropped onto the ground.

The other fellow wanted to move forward to cop a feel. He extended his outstretched hand in the direction of the girl's breast.

"Damn it! Hold her tight! She kicked me!"

"Hurry up! Someone will be coming soon!"

Yu Jiajia screamed out desperately, but a hand slid over to cover her mouth. Her legs lashed out back and forth, only to have a stinking mouth move toward her. She felt so fearful that her body turned limp and her mind entered a state of shock.

Yu Jiajia who was like the moon among the stars within the school could never have dreamt that she would end up being sexually assaulted by the side entrance of the school.

It was at that moment that the metal door beside them suddenly pushed open. A head emerged out and asked. "What is going on?"

Yu Jiajia seemed to have found a lifesaver. She quickly broke free from the hand covering her mouth and struggled to shout. "Help! Help!"

"Damn it!" The hormone driven fellow who had wanted to fondle her breast was enraged and he stared at the head sticking out from the door. "If you do not want to die, then scram back inside!"

As he said that, he pulled out a switchblade from his pocket.

The face on the head was stiff and wooden, its eyes indifferent – Yu Jiajia recognized who that person was and her heart sank.

It was the youngster who was always getting bullied... this person's cowardice was something that everyone in school knew.

Sure enough, his head quickly shrank back inside and Yu Jiajia fell into despair.

However, two seconds later, the door was pushed open once again. The thin and short youngster charged out!

In his hand was a broom!

"You, you guys... let her go!"

Beads of sweat appeared on his forehead and nose. Despite the redness on his face, there was firmness in his eyes – however, his hands shakily held onto the broom.

"Damn it!" The fellow with the switchblade cursed out as the broom was swung down onto him.

The broom was the type used to sweep the streets. It descended in an arc and the switchblade was incapable of blocking it.

As it so happened, the fellow had let out a curse at the same time. He felt several of the broom fibres poking into his mouth and the smell of soil invaded his mouth. He quickly took several steps back. After suffering from the broom slap, the pain he felt was not particularly severe. However, surprise and rage welled up from inside him.

The fellow was enraged. He stepped forward and used one hand to pull away the broom. Then, he delivered a kick onto the youngster's lower abdomen.

As expected, the youngster's thin and short figure fell down. Next, the fellow pounced forward. Seemingly riding the youngster's body, the fellow began showering the youngster with his fists.

Blood flowed out from the youngster's nose and he held up both hands in an attempt to protect his head. However, the other fellow had loosened his grip on Yu Jiajia and rushed forward as well. He then delivered a kick at the youngster's loin area.

Being on the receiving end of those fists and kicks, the thin and short figure was soon curling himself up into a ball like shape on the ground.

"This senior is going to make you bleed!" The fellow who had his fun interrupted was filled with rage. Wielding the switchblade in hand, he moved forward and stabbed it forward. His accomplice was still able to maintain a sense of reason. However, having participated in the beating, he was feeling spent and thus, he did not stop the enraged fellow.

Seeing the blade of the switchblade descending, Yu Jiajia could only let out a scream.

However, before the blade could stab into the youngster's cloth, the enraged fellow's hand was grabbed.

Next, the fellow felt a powerful force lifting his body up into the air and was sent flying away. His body then slammed heavily onto the walls of the alley. His head struck a trashcan beside the wall and his face became covered with blood.

Standing by the side, Chen Xiaolian raised a foot and kicked the other fellow out of the way.

"Are you all right?" Chen Xiaolian extended his hand toward the youngster who was on the ground.

The other party however, appeared to have been beaten to the point of suffering from disordered thoughts. His first reaction was to slap the

hand away before moving to defend his head.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and turned around to look at the two delinquents.

“I hate this kind of trash the most,” Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate as he moved over and extended his hands to grab onto their wrists. Then, he twisted forcefully.

Ka ka!

A very clear and blunt sound accompanied by two miserable screams echoed out.

Clearly, the two fellows' wrists had been twisted.

Chen Xiaolian swiftly extended his hands yet again and two “ka” sounds could be heard once more!

“Go to the hospital by yourselves,” Chen Xiaolian said coldly.

The intense pain caused the two of them to sober up. With both their wrists fractured, they lost whatever desire or courage they have to fight back. They hastily got up and staggered out of the alley before running away.

Chen Xiaolian turned around and helped the thin and short youngster up from the ground. He also helped to dust off the dirt from the youngster's body.

The youngster raised his eyelids and looked at Chen Xiaolian coolly, biting down on his lips.

“You are a real man,” Chen Xiaolian gave him a thumbs up.

With tears smearing her face, Yu Jiajia gingerly leaned over. “It, it is you?”

“En, how are you,” Chen Xiaolian looked at Yu Jiajia and determined that she did not recall what happened last night...

“Just now, thank you...” Yu Jiajia nodded repeatedly. Without waiting for Chen Xiaolian's reply, she bowed toward the thin and short figure.

“Thank you as well. You...” She looked at the blood trickling down the

youngster's nose. "Are you all right? Do, do you need to go to the hospital?"

"It is nothing," The youngster woodenly shook his head.

"A girl should not be walking around the street in the early morning hours," Chen Xiaolian softly said.

"I... I came to the school for morning exercise."

Yu Jiajia was not lying. She did indeed come to school early in order to participate in morning exercises.

Their school had a dance club. Obviously... a beauty such as Yu Jiajia would be the main performer on stage. Every day during summer break, she would come to school and participate in morning exercises in the dance club's room. Due to special reasons, she arrived earlier than usual today.

The girl had suffered from no small amount of shock and Chen Xiaolian accompanied the two of them into the school grounds. Seeing Yu Jiajia going up the school building and into the exercise room, he turned around to regard the youngster. "Your face is swollen. Do you have ice cubes at home?"

The youngster shook his head.

Chen Xiaolian considered the matter and reached for his shirt's pocket. Pulling out a first aid kit from his pocket, he said. "Let us go, I will help you with your wounds." Looking at the other party, he continued. "Do you live nearby?"

The other party raised a hand and pointed at a certain direction.

...

The youngster's residence was located inside the school grounds... it was a small place located at the mouth area of the sports field. A brick hut was built next to the school canteen and boiler room. Judging from its appearance, it was apparent that this was an illegal housing. However, since it was built inside the school, nobody came to deal with it.

This hut was built by the school. It was built using some debris for janitors to use as a form of lodging.

Accompanying the youngster into the hut with low hanging ceiling, Chen Xiaolian smelt a faint mouldy scent. The scent was a result of having no ventilation.

Chen Xiaolian frowned and looked at the hut's windows. He found that the windows had been closed up. Planks of wood were nailed over it.

"Why did you not open the windows?" Chen Xiaolian pointed at the windows.

"Winter winds, it is broken," The answer sounded stiff.

"All right, I will help you with your wounds. Come here."

Chen Xiaolian had the youngster sit down and proceeded to examine him. After his examination, he found that the youngster was not only suffering from nosebleeds. His arm had been sprained and the area around his waist was turning green. Clearly, that was the result of being kicked.

Most importantly, after taking off the youngster's shirt, he saw that there were other wounds upon the youngster's skinny body – those wounds were clearly the result of being beaten.

Chen Xiaolian's face turned twisted and he asked. "Do you always get bullied?"

"... used to it," The youngster shook his head.

Chen Xiaolian helped to wipe off the blood on the youngster's nose. After plugging them with cotton pugs, he produced a bottle of medicinal liquor and applied it.

The youngster did not cry out in pain. He silently allowed Chen Xiaolian to finish up. Then, he suddenly stood up and walked stiffly out of the room.

After a moment, he returned with a glass cup. The glass contained steaming, hot water.

“You... drink water,” He stood before Chen Xiaolian and placed it on the table before Chen Xiaolian. “Cup, I cleaned, very clean!”

Chen Xiaolian noted that although the youngster’s hands were wet, his heart remained warm.

Without showing any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian picked up the glass and swallowed a mouthful of water. Although there was a thick scent of lime scale coming from the water, Chen Xiaolian gulped it down.

“You were very brave back then,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “I saw it.”

The youngster did not say anything.

“Usually, the students of this school would always bully you. Why do you want to help her earlier?”

The youngster looked at the cup before Chen Xiaolian. His movements was slow and he thought for a moment before answering. “Mother said, must protect females, cannot hurt females,”

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

It was then that Yu Jiajia’s voice could be heard coming from the outside.

“Hello, is there... anybody home?”

Chen Xiaolian stood up and went over. Opening the door, he saw Yu Jiajia standing before the door.

She was carrying a plastic bag containing a packet of soymilk and two pastries. Additionally, there was also a bottle of something that looked like medicated oil.

This action of hers improved Chen Xiaolian’s impression toward her.

“I... just now, I saw his Chinese pancake falling onto the ground. So, I got him something to eat,” Yu Jiajia blushed and she stiffened. Suddenly remembering something, she then raised up the bag that she was holding. “There is also some ointment for bruises. It is something we often use when dancing; its effects are very good. Just now, he was badly hurt, i... I...”

“Come on in,” Chen Xiaolian stepped aside. “It would be better for you to thank him yourself.”

“En!” Yu Jiajia nodded her head vigorously and walked inside.

The mouldy scent within the room only caused her to lightly knit her eyebrows and she did not say anything about it. She walked toward the thin figure sitting on the bed and placed the bag of items by his side. “Thank you for earlier, I am truly, truly thankful! You... you are a good person!”

Chen Xiaolian who was by the side could not restrain himself and smiled. “You are giving out ‘good person cards’ so early in the morning? Miss school beauty?” [2]

Yu Jiajia’s face blushed once more. She bit her lips, not knowing what to say.

“I am fine,” The thin youngster raised his head and looked at Yu Jiajia. “You can go.”

“... ..” Yu Jiajia gripped her own wrists and hesitated before speaking in a whisper. “I also want to say sorry. You... you keep getting bullied all the time, but I did not help you. Moreover... moreover... sometimes, the reason they bullied you is because of me...”

The youngster did not say anything. He silently waited for Yu Jiajia to finish her words before shaking her head. “I am fine.”

Faced with such a wooden response, Yu Jiajia was at a loss at what to do. She did not know how she should converse with the other party.

The atmosphere within the room became somewhat awkward and Chen Xiaolian made a gesture toward Yu Jiajia. The two of them walked outside.

“All right, since it is nothing serious, you should head back,” Chen Xiaolian observed that the skies had grown bright and the sun had risen. He smiled and said. “You have suffered from quite the shock. Go back and do your exercise.”

“Should we report this to the police?”

“... .. forget it,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “I will be leaving soon. If you call the police over, I will be in trouble as well. Besides, I have already given those two a lesson. With their broken hands, even if they went to the hospital, they will probably need a few months to recover. They will be in for bitter times.”

“En, in that case, I will go back,” Yu Jiajia thought about it and felt that Chen Xiaolian was not too keen on talking with her. This discovery caused the girl to feel slightly confused. She hesitated for a moment. “Thank you for earlier, you are a...”

“Good person! I know I am a good person,” Chen Xiaolian gave a grudging smile. “It has only been one day since I came all the way to Hangzhou, and yet I have received the ‘good person card’. All right then, off you go.”

Yu Jiajia broke into a laugh and she looked earnestly at Chen Xiaolian. “Can you tell me your name?”

Chen Xiaolian thought it through and looked at Yu Jiajia. There was a sincere smile on her face.

“My name is Roddy.”

Yu Jiajia’s eyes squinted up in a smile and she looked at Chen Xiaolian. “I will remember your name! Thank you, Roddy!”

After saying that, the girl’s face blushed and she lowered her head before running away.

...

“Achoo!”

At a certain location within the world, Roddy sneezed. He gazed upward and shivered a little. “It must be that bastard Xiaolian speaking ill about me behind my back.”

He shook his head and leaned upon a tree. Sticking his head out, his expression soon turned gentle as he looked at a park bench situated in the

distance where a slim figure was seated.

He stared quietly.

...

“You were lying just now.”

Chen Xiaolian turned around and saw the thin youngster standing by the door, looking at him.

“Eh?”

“Roddy... that is definitely not your real name,” He shook his head and said in a very serious tone. “You lied to her.”

“How did you know?” Chen Xiaolian raised his eyebrows.

“I just know,” He answered with the same dim-witted voice. “When others lie, I can usually figure it out.”

Pausing, he tried to explain what he meant. “When you were telling her your name, your tone of voice was slightly slow. That meant you were considering something – is there any need to consider anything when someone wants to say their own name? But when you were saying the word Roddy, your tone becomes very smooth. That means you must be very familiar with the name Roddy. However, it is definitely not your name... rather; it is someone you are very familiar with.”

Chen Xiaolian was momentarily stunned.

He suddenly recalled the incident that happened by the school entrance yesterday. Back then, when this youngster was walking away, he had said:

“I am no fool!”

...

Chen Xiaolian regarded the other party solemnly and extended one hand out. “My name is Chen Xiaolian. This is my real name. I am eighteen years old. From this moment onward, we are friends.”

“Friends...” A glint flashed through the youngster’s eyes and he pointed at his nose. “Da Gang, twenty-two years old.”

Da Gang? (great & firm) It is a really average name – just like his appearance. However... looking at his thin and small constitution, Chen Xiaolian smiled. “Your parents must have hoped that you would become tall and strong. That is why they gave you this name, right?”

However, right after saying those words, Chen Xiaolian regretted it.

He saw Da Gang’s expression turning glum.

Chen Xiaolian immediately recalled Da Gang’s miserable life... his parents...

“I am sorry.”

“... .. it is all right,” Da Gang shook his head.

...

Appearance wise, Da Gang did not appear like a twenty-two-year-old at all. His figure was thin and short. Perhaps the prolonged period of malnutrition had led to him suffering from stunted growth.

Chen Xiaolian did not leave immediately. Instead, he sat down in the room with Da Gang.

He gradually realized that Da Gang was a very interesting person.

Da Gang appeared wooden and dim-witted. However, that was only on the surface. He simply did not like to communicate much and was not a talkative person. In fact, he was not stupid. He understood pretty much everything and could be considered a relatively intelligent person.

Da Gang heated up a pot of water in the room. Once the water was boiling, he picked up the baked pastry brought by Yu Jiajia, broke them down and tossed them inside, stirring them together. Next, he handed a pair of chopsticks and a bowl to Chen Xiaolian.

“Eat?” Da Gang looked at Chen Xiaolian. There was an earnest look on Da Gang’s face. “The weather is cold. Since the pastry is hard, it won’t taste as it is. It will be tasty now that it is softened.”

Chen Xiaolian noticed the look of eagerness within Da Gang’s eyes.

This fellow must have almost no friends and none of them was willing to visit him. Thus, when facing someone who had shown kindness toward him, he would exhibit enthusiasm – it was a rather awkward form of hospitality. However, it was likely that he really wanted to give Chen Xiaolian a treat.

Putting on his best to entertain this ‘new friend’.

The bowl that he had given to Chen Xiaolian was probably his only one. Da Gang picked up the lid to use as a bowl.

Boiling tap water mixed with baked pastry would naturally not be tasty, Additionally, Chen Xiaolian had already eaten his fill.

However, he did not hesitate. Picking up the chopsticks, he scooped up a big clump and wolfed it down before Da Gang’s eager eyes.

After eating a bowl of this steaming hot food, his body felt warm and fuzzy even though the weather was cold outside.

Da Gang smiled. His smiling appearance was also a dim-witted looking smile, giving him the appearance of a fool. He then picked up the lid, used his chopsticks to scoop up the pastry, and ate it.

As they ate, Chen Xiaolian asked Da Gang some questions. Da Gang answered them without hiding anything.

The story of his life was as Chen Xiaolian had heard yesterday... due to the argument regarding a divorce, his father had accidentally killed his mother.

According to Da Gang, he had to witness his father’s abusive habit since he was young.

Da Gang explained that his father was a very ill-tempered man and both Da Gang and his mother were often beaten as a child.

In fact, both his parents worked as janitors in the school. Da Gang himself had attended this school all the way until he graduated.

Originally, there was a school-run factory within the school grounds. It was a product of the nineties era. However, due to the change in national

policies, the school-run factory was closed and most of the janitors there were sent off. Da Gang's parents used money to form some connections, allowing them to stay at the school. That way, they were able to have a stable job. A modest job, but a fairly stable one.

Ever since he was young, Da Gang has had to witness his father beating up his mother. That man was ill-tempered and an alcoholic. Every time he got drunk, he would go beat up both mother and son.

"Since I was young, mother would tell me... I must not hit a female, I must protect females," Da Gang said in a low tone.

"So, that is why you stepped forward to help Yu Jiajia?" Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Da Gang looked at Chen Xiaolian and suddenly whispered. "You are... from Jinling." [3]

"Hmm?" Chen Xiaolian became surprised.

"There is an accent in the way you speak. There is a Jinling accent in your words," Da Gang smiled, revealing a warm feeling from both his eyes and smile. "My mother is from Jinling as well. I can identify that accent."

Chen Xiaolian was silent as he looked at Da Gang.

Hesitating for a moment, Chen Xiaolian suddenly asked. "Da Gang... are you willing to leave this place?"

"... .. leave?"

"En, come with me to Jinling," Chen Xiaolian thought about it. "I can help you find work there. Furthermore, no one will bully you."

Da Gang became silent.

After a while, he raised his head and looked around at everything within the room...

The messy and dilapidated furniture...

Da Gang looked at Chen Xiaolian and shook his head. "Better... not."

The youngster slowly said in a very serious tone. "I want to protect this

home. They are no longer here, if I leave...”

As he said that, his voice grew heavier.

“If I leave... home, will be no more.”

...

...

[Author’s notes: I do not know how everyone will think about this chapter. Writing this chapter, my execution is much slower with more emphasis on emotions.

[This character known as Da Gang is obviously very important... I feel like I am in the position of a God, where I create the characters with emotions.

[Each of them will have their own story.]

—

1 There is a huge debate on whether bean curd should be eaten with sweet flavour or salt flavour. The debate is so lengthy, it has become the 3rd highest ranked topic in Weibo. It has also escalated to the point where it has become a ‘war of the factions’. They call themselves the ‘Sweet Faction’, ‘Salt Faction’, ‘Bilateral Talks Faction’. There is also the ‘No Compromise Faction’. This debate has now been labelled as the ‘Bean Curd Wars’!

[Source: Baidu]

Da Gang. Raw: ‘大刚’, pinyin: ‘dà gāng’. ‘dà’ (大) means great or big, ‘gāng’ (刚) means firm or exactly.

2 ‘Good person card’ is a word meant to signify a girl’s polite action of rejecting a guy’s courtship toward her. It usually begins with... you guessed it... “You are a good person, but...”.

3 Jinling is another word for Nanjing.

Chapter 165: Fearless War Axe

Chen Xiaolian rode on the afternoon train back to Jinling (Nanjing).

Before leaving, he had considered leaving some money for Da Gang. However, he recalled how Da Gang had rejected the money he gave the day before... thus, Chen Xiaolian decided against it. Despite his dim-witted appearance, Da Gang was a very assertive person. With his strong level of self-esteem, Chen Xiaolian's attempt to give him money may end up being seen as an insult toward him.

Instead, Chen Xiaolian gave Da Gang his mobile phone number. He told Da Gang to call him if anything were to happen.

It was already afternoon by the time he reached Jinling. The first thing Chen Xiaolian did was to call up Qiao Qiao.

However, the call was left unanswered.

This caused Chen Xiaolian to feel a slight unease.

He then made a call to Soo Soo; but her phone was turned off.

Qiao Yifeng's face appeared within Chen Xiaolian's mind.

Perhaps Qiao Qiao's father had returned home and engaged in a discussion with Qiao Qiao. Who knew what had happened during the course of their discussion.

"It seems this matter is getting more complicated," Chen Xiaolian scratched his head in distress.

Arriving home, he saw that Xia Xiaolei was the only one inside. This fellow was seated before the computer inside the study, playing LoL. Not surprising, he had logged in using Chen Xiaolian's account and ended up being severely raped. The win rate of the account fell to below 30 per cent.

Chen Xiaolian could not help but smile bitterly when he saw that Xia Xiaolei had, in merely two days' time garner himself an infamous nickname:

Nicknamed: Prince of Feeders. [1]

...

In a certain location, Han Bi dragged his exhausted figure out from a stretch of forest.

There were some scars on his face, especially on his eyebrows. A scar had cut his thick, brush like eyebrows apart.

Han Bi slumped onto the ground and exhaled.

[System prompt: This instance dungeon quest ended in failure. You will receive system punishment. System will perform calculations based on the performance of the participants. Now arranging the entry time for the punishment instance dungeon.]

“A failure...” Han Bi leaned his back onto a tree.

Pulling out a cigarette, he shakily lit it up – his arms and legs were trembling.

“After leaving the group, I can no longer do anything?” Han Bi raised his head up and looked at the grey skies in dismay. “I will not accept that! I will never accept that!”

As he continued trembling, he swallowed a Healing Type Beast Blood. After a moment, Han Bi slowly stood up, determined his location and stumbled away.

“I will not accept it!”

...

In the airport, Lun Tai and Bei Tai walked out side by side, a pair of sunglasses on both their faces. Both of them carried only a simple backpack behind them. They had no other luggage with them.

Walking out from the airport, they saw Chen Xiaolian and Xia Xiaolei standing by the exit, waving toward them.

“Did you enjoy yourselves?” Chen Xiaolian looked at Lun Tai. Lun Tai curled the corners of his lips and laughed. “It is a pity you did not go.

Even if you have Qiao Qiao and you do not want to look for a woman, you can always have fun in the casino.”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “I am not fond of those things.”

Bei Tai had already reached out and placed his arms over Xia Xiaolei’s neck like a hook and laughed out. “Little kid, next time, I will bring you together so you can get a taste!”

“Do not teach a kid those dirty stuff. He has yet to come of age,” Chen Xiaolian laughed and pulled Xia Xiaolei back.

Bei Tai looked around for a while and asked. “Where are the others? Haven’t Roddy returned?”

“No,” Chen Xiaolian frowned. “I cannot reach his phone. Who knows what the Hell he is up to.”

“Where is your girlfriend?”

Lun Tai looked at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips and answered. “There is something going on at her home.”

Noting Chen Xiaolian’s hollow answer, Lun Tai smiled and slapped his shoulder. “Let us go. This is your neck of the woods. The accommodation and lodgings of us two brothers will be on you. Oh, right. This time’s Las Vegas trip, we ended up blowing away all our money. After buying the ticket, we do not even have enough money to eat instant noodles.”

Chen Xiaolian laughed. “Let us go. I will bring you guys for a feast.”

...

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai also came to stay in Chen Xiaolian’s home.

During the next one and a half days, the four young adults lived under one roof. Frankly though, there was nothing for them to do.

The only thing they did was drink alcohol and play some games.

On the evening of the second day, Lun Tai and Chen Xiaolian engaged in a discussion.

“We cannot simply hang around like this. We would be wasting this time,” Lun Tai sighed. “We had to put our lives on the line to fight and kill in order to survive the instance dungeons. Could it be simply for the sake of drinking and playing games every day?”

Chen Xiaolian’s expression remained calm. “What do you mean?”

“We should take advantage of this time,” Lun Tai said in a serious tone. “Last time, you mentioned that we would be establishing a base...”

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Truth be told, this matter was constantly in his mind.

The matter with Qiao Yifeng had thoroughly shocked him.

Unquestionably, the guild that Qiao Yifeng was part of possessed a high level of strength. Everything that the super wealthy Qiao Yifeng possessed actually belonged to the guild. Their execution of this matter was truly masterful!

In fact, what Chen Xiaolian had thought of doing happened to resemble the path taken by Qiao Yifeng’s guild. However, he had not taken into account the issue of having an agent. He had intended to do it himself.

Presently though, he came to realize that things were not so simple.

First was the question of money!

Chen Xiaolian was not a poor person. The amount of royalties he received each month would go into the five-digits – compared to his peers, he could be considered a little plutocrat.

However, in order to establish a base of that magnitude, that amount of money could barely count as a drop in the bucket.

“There are many usages to a base of operations. First, we will be able to use the time not spent in instance dungeons for training.

“We do not necessarily have to depend entirely on the system for the enhancement of our body and the attributes of the body. Even among ordinary people, there will be a huge disparity in battle strength between one with a robust and healthy body and one with weak body.

“Although we Awakened can enhance our bodies through the system, the price for that is very high. The various body enhancing medicinal substances, equipment and training skills require a hefty amount of points.

“Thus, training ourselves is one of the basic methods to save up on points. Although the increment gained from our own training is very small, it is still better than nothing.

“Besides, even if one had an [S] class – Physique, if that person acts like a lazy bum and eat junk food, spending his days eating and sleeping, in one month’s time, their body will degrade.

“After spending so much to acquire such a powerful body only to have it degrade away, if that happens, we won’t even be able to cry.

“I do not wish to stay here in this world for a few months only to end up with a pot belly and a fat body.”

Lun Tai’s words were very direct and straight to the point.

“There is also combat skills,” Chen Xiaolian faintly said. “We can train up on basic combat skills there. Through training, we can also increase our proficiency toward the weapons we acquired from the system.”

“Overall, there will be benefits. Although it will not be obvious, constant drops of water will hollow a stone,” Lun Tai nodded his head.

“There is our equipment as well,” The military fanatic Bei Tai shouted out. “We will still have to test out the Thunderstorm Tank, no? If we do not practice using it, then, when we suddenly take it out in the middle of a battle, forget starting it up, I may not even be able to aim with it since I have never touched it before!”

Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly and said. “If we are to take out the Thunderstorm Tank, I fear that we will soon be in the headlines. Then, we can just wait for the army to come catch us.”

Forget a Thunderstorm Tank, even if they were to get their hands on an ordinary tank, they would still not be able to train using it.

“We also need to train with firearms. If we do not open fire for too long, our shooting instincts will become dull.”

Chen Xiaolian thought about it and made the necessary calculations.

We need a shooting range... a training field where we can train our bodies. It would be even better if we can get a shooting range that allows us to test fire the Thunderstorm Tank's artillery.

All right, since we also need an armoury – if we can have that, it would be for the best. But if there aren't, we can first place the weapons inside the Storage Watch.

Where should I go to find such a large place? It must be secluded so that outsiders cannot find it.

The amount of money he has inside his savings was only enough to pay for the down payment for a second-hand house.

“Money is not a huge problem. If the next instance dungeon is the same as the Tokyo instance dungeon, we just need to allocate some time to rob a bank and clear out its vault. That way, our financial problems will be mostly solved,” Lun Tai said coolly. “The issue however, lies in the fact that even if we have the money, we may not be able to buy up a piece of land. This matter is not simple and we will need someone to run around to help us with that.”

Xia Xiaolei who had been sitting silently beside them suddenly let out a sigh. “It would be great if we could live inside Zero City... there is everything inside.”

The three of them turned around to look at Xia Xiaolei. Chen Xiaolian laughed out. “What are you dreaming about? A place like Zero City is reserved for peak guilds.”

It was likely that not even Qiao Yifeng's guild could qualify for permanent residence within Zero City. Otherwise, they would not have needed to get Qiao Yifeng to help them as their agent and to amass such a huge amount of assets.

“Is there a rough estimate to when the next instance dungeon will

open?” Chen Xiaolian asked Lun Tai.

“According to my experience, after having participated in an instance dungeon, there will be roughly one month’s time before the system selects us again,” Lun Tai thought about it. “Of course, if you want to immediately enter an instance dungeon, that is not impossible. Just find an acquaintance within another guild and enter their instance dungeon.”

Chen Xiaolian quickly recalled that incident right before he entered the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon. Back then, other guild members aiming to fish in troubled waters had occupied the entrance to the instance dungeon.

“I’d rather not. There will be no shortage of instance dungeons in the future. Who would take the initiative to go inside?” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

He considered the issue and said. “If we cannot accomplish our bigger goals, then we will just have to start with the smaller ones. Live-fire exercise for firearms and the Thunderstorm Tank is something we still cannot do. However, finding a place to do some simple body training is still quite easy. Hmm, Xia Xiaolei has the weakest level of strength. We can train him up. Since we know some martial skills, we can try to teach it to him. At least, it will be cheaper than us purchasing it from the system. Let him learn however much he can. It would be better than nothing.”

And so, the matter was decided.

Chen Xiaolian found a fitness centre inside the city.

The first time they went, they nearly gave the fitness centre’s coach a huge scare.

After Lun Tai went forward, the amount of weight he pushed up while bench-pressing nearly gave the coach a heart attack. Thankfully, Chen Xiaolian’s reaction was fast and he quickly stepped forward with some bluffs. In the end, the coach thought that he made an error with the equipment and let it go despite still having some scepticism about the matter.

Chen Xiaolian and his group quickly left. In the outskirts of the city, they finally found another fitness centre with dismal patronage.

It was a very dilapidated building. Originally a large-scale shopping mall, the lack of customers led to the entirety of the 3rd floor being rented to a fitness centre – however, there were still not much customers.

Chen Xiaolian observed that the area was large enough. There was also a training room for taekwondo. However, the signboard had been taken down. Supposedly, it was due to the fact that this place was not suitable. The name of the instructor was also not famous enough, leading to almost no one signing up. Thus, this taekwondo class was basically close to being shut down.

Using a small amount of money, Chen Xiaolian was able to reach an agreement with the other party.

He entered a subcontract for the taekwondo training room from three in the afternoon until nine in the evening every day.

At the same time, they could use the fitness equipment of the fitness centre for free.

The business here was scarce and the fitness equipment were shabby. There was also no fitness instructor around. However, that was a good thing for them, as it would allow them to avoid exposure.

Regardless of whom it may be, if they were to see a lean and fair faced youngster like Chen Xiaolian wave a barbell that weighed over a hundred kg around, they would likely end up getting a heart attack.

Unfortunately for Xia Xiaolei, he was in for bitter times.

The bored brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai made him their newest toy and put him through an intense session of training.

The fellow had no martial skill to speak of. Thus, Lun Tai began by teaching him unarmed combat skills. Then, Bei Tai would teach him how to use the military knife.

Although Xia Xiaolei's body had already been enhanced by the Genetic

Enhancement Serum, he had zero knowledge in the area of combat skills. In the next two days, he ended up being beaten to the point where his face swelled black and blue.

The various training for body techniques left Xia Xiaolei crying for his parents every day. If an uninformed outsider were to walk by, they would mistakenly assume that some criminal activities were going on inside.

Chen Xiaolian too began to assess himself.

Presently, his strongest martial skill was the Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes.

However, the experience within the Tokyo instance dungeon had left him with a sense that the [B] class skill was gradually becoming insufficient. Its lethality was too low when faced against a strong enemy.

Additionally, Bone Crusher Axe had also been destroyed. Chen Xiaolian did not even have a weapon he could handily use.

So, he had Xia Xiaolei help him look through the Exchange System.

There, he found a weapon that appealed to him.

...

Fearless War Axe.

It would be more accurate to say that it was a short pole weapon.

The axe has dual blades the shape of a crescent moon and a tip. Its handle was one metre long, a medium length weapon. It would be best used when on foot and would likely be too short for horseback use.

[A] class melee weapon!

It came equipped with a skill: Fearless Roar.

When triggered, the skill will allow the user to increase the cleaving effect by 50 per cent. The effect has a duration of 15 seconds (cumulative total). While it can be used repeatedly, once the cumulative total of 15 seconds had ended, the skill will disappear and enter a cool down period of 1 hour. [2]

...

—

1 The act of 'feeding' occurs when someone goes in and carelessly gets themselves killed in a game. That usually ends up giving the enemy team money and experience to level up and buy better equipment.

2 Similar to Roddy's Mech, the skill's 15 seconds can be cancelled halfway to preserve the remaining duration to be used again when necessary.

Chapter 166: Meaning

Regarding the 50 % increase in cleaving effect, Chen Xiaolian had discussed it with Lun Tai and came up with a rough estimate.

His current strength was at [B+] class. If it was increased by 50 %, then it should be infinitely close to [A-] class!

In other words, when using the Fearless War Axe's skill – Fearless Roar – he would be able to unleash a strength that was close to [A-] class within 15 seconds.

Of course, it was only close to [A-] class. There would still be some difference between his strength and the real deal.

This war axe was definitely not cheap.

2,500 points!

Commonly speaking, most [A] class weapons in the system were priced at 2,000 points and above. This axe was certainly somewhat more expensive.

However, its ability to increase the cleaving effect by 50 % was very praiseworthy and rare. That was the reason behind its high price.

After reconsidering it again and again, Chen Xiaolian decided that this Fearless War Axe was the most suitable weapon for him at present.

First, his most powerful martial skill was the 'Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes'. The skill was an axe skill.

Thus, it would be more suited to the Fearless War Axe.

Even if he were given the 'Frostmourne', he who had no appropriate sword skills would only be able to use basic sword skills with it. That would be a colossal waste. [1]

Thus, Chen Xiaolian made the decision to purchase it!

2,500 points. With Xia Xiaolei, the humanoid discount card, the price became 2,000 points.

Additionally, Chen Xiaolian also possessed another attribute enhancement that he had not used!

In the island instance dungeon, he had killed the Black Widow and acquired this reward for killing an [A] class monster.

The reward allowed him to select any one attribute. That attribute will be increased by one class.

Back then, Chen Xiaolian felt that the class of his attributes were too low and had chosen not to use the reward.

After all, increasing an attribute from [C] class to [C+] class was something that could be done through some more ordinary medicinal substances.

However, to increase an attribute from [A+] class to [S-] class... the corresponding price would likely be monumental!

Chen Xiaolian had planned to leave the reward to be used at a later date.

At present, the reward remained unused within his system.

The present Chen Xiaolian's attributes were [B] class for all except Physique, which had been increased to [B+] class.

If he were to use it now, his Physique would be increased to [A-] class!

When that happens... add that to the Fearless War Axe's skill – Fearless Roar...

Would it not become infinitely close to the real [A] class?

Chen Xiaolian pondered about it and hesitated for a long time. In the end, he decided not to.

He had a feeling that leaving this reward for later might prove more beneficial!

...

Chen Xiaolian gripped onto Fearless War Axe; its heaviness gave Chen Xiaolian an inexplicable sense of ease.

The two sides of the dual bladed war axe were different in size – one big and one small. With the spiral shaped tip in the middle, its shape exuded an European fantasy atmosphere.

Chen Xiaolian brandished it around for a moment within the training room. Then, he tried using Fearless War Axe to unleash the Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes skill.

Despite not engaging in real combat, Chen Xiaolian could feel that his attack power had increased.

Chen Xiaolian still had 1,800 points left.

After considering it, he purchased the exclusive [B] class protective suit, worth 300 points, from the guild exchange system.

Chen Xiaolian continued considering his options for the remaining 1,500 points.

A skill within the Exchange System caught his fancy.

It was a pole weapon skill book.

Fearless War Axe was a pole weapon. In other words, it was compatible with both axe and pole weapon skills. Naturally, it was also possible to use a sword skill when wielding it. However, the power behind its attacks would slip badly.

Since the weapon in hand was compatible, not taking advantage of its ability to utilize pole weapon skills would be a shame.

Chen Xiaolian had Xia Xiaolei help him go through the possible options and became interested in a pole weapon skill.

“Charging Stinger skill.”

[B+] class skill.

The system description stated that it was an infantry combat skill for knights who wield pole weapons.

The Stinger skill was not difficult. There was only a small number of pole weapon techniques with several forms. The lethality of the skill was

only [B] class.

However, there was a reason why the pole weapon skill was labelled as [B+] class.

Because this pole weapon skill had a certain movement training technique.

According to the system prompt, practicing this Charging Stinger skill could enhance the movement speed of the user. By using this pole weapon skill in battle, the user's Agility attribute would then automatically increase up to [B+] class.

Additionally, after practicing and using it for a long time, the user's Agility attribute could experience a slight improvement! Naturally, this improvement would occur slowly.

However, when using this pole weapon skill, his Agility attribute will automatically be increased to [B+] class. That was the equivalent of increasing one of his attributes.

This was a buy 1 free 1 deal. How could Chen Xiaolian miss out on it?

Although the item was of the [B+] class, the price was rather expensive.

The price within the system was at 1,000 points.

After going through the humanoid discount card, it became 800 points.

Looking at the remaining 700 points, Chen Xiaolian sighed – unknowingly, the points had already decreased by so much.

He then had Xia Xiaolei help him purchase 10 [Beginner] class Healing Beast Blood and 5 [Beginner] class All Curing Antidote. Chen Xiaolian paid for them. Those medicinal substances would be the reserve items for the guild members.

After discount, the price came to 600 points.

As the Guild Leader, he had to be the one to pay for it.

In the end, Chen Xiaolian was left with only 100 points.

...

Lun Tai and Bei Tai's process of enhancing themselves was much simpler.

They had informed Chen Xiaolian the details regarding their skills.

Lun Tai's Exclusive Skill will strengthen and transform him into a berserk warrior when activated, a [B+] class skill. Its name was 'Muscle Fruit'.

When activated, it would increase his melee attributes by 20 % up to a maximum of 50 %.

The most brutal aspect of this skill was that the more damage his body was subjected to, the more berserk he would get.

In other words, he would feel neither pain nor damage.

Once blood was shed, once an injury was inflicted on him, he would grow more berserk.

The highest attribute that Lun Tai currently possessed was his Physique, which was at [A-] class.

By activating his skill, he could exhibit a battle strength that was beyond [A] class! Additionally, he would not be affected by pain.

Of course, 'Muscle Fruit' skill was not all-powerful.

If the damage taken were too high, he would end up dying. His skill was similar to being injected with stimulants when getting hurt. He could not become impervious to damage, only berserk.

If the damage taken was too heavy, he could still be crippled or killed off. However, his tolerance toward pain would become terrifying.

Lun Tai's path of enhancement was in melee.

He decided to upgrade his skill.

The 'Muscle Fruit' skill could be directly upgraded through the system.

The method of upgrading involved purchasing 'Muscle Fruit Seeds'.

A Muscle Fruit Seed could upgrade the skill and increase the upper limit of the skill by 5 %.

However, the price was extremely expensive.

800 points!

Using the humanoid discount card, Lun Tai used up 1,280 points to increase the upper limit of his Muscle Fruit skill by 10 %.

Thus, the maximum amount of increase in melee attributes was now at 60 %!

According to Lun Tai, he would be able to even go toe to toe with an [A] class melee opponent.

Naturally, that was only when the skill was in effect.

...

Bei Tai's skill was known as 'Air Incarceration'.

It was a field control skill, [B+] class.

It was a battle support skill. It could create incarcerating airflow to immobilize enemy movements. Naturally, there was an extremely strict limit to the duration. Depending on the strength of the enemy and the number of enemies, the duration for the skill would be shortened.

It was a skill that allowed him to control airflows. In fact, it could even create vacuum – however, the current Bei Tai could not do so.

Bei Tai did not upgrade his skill. According to him, the level of this skill was sufficient for now.

Thus, the enhancement direction that Bei Tai took was... military weapons.

This fellow was a firearms maniac.

He spent 600 points to purchase an indestructible [B+] class Electromagnetic Rifle with unlimited ammunition and astonishingly lethal firepower!

One blast could directly break apart the steel plates of the existing main battle tanks!

However, the weapon could not be fired consecutively. Every time it was

fired, it would require one minute to recharge.

Additionally, this fellow also purchased an indestructible military knife, another [B+] class item. Observing sparks being emitted from the military knife as Bei Tai brandished it, Chen Xiaolian knew that he must have a military knife-related martial skill.

Xia Xiaolei had it tough.

Everything he had was only enough to purchase an exclusive protective suit from the Meteor Rock Guild.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai had also bought one each – the both of them had some points saved up. They were veterans after all. Although they were not experts, they had survived through a considerable number of instance dungeons. Thus, they did have some points saved up.

...

The next few days were spent inside the fitness centre where they familiarized themselves with their new weapons and skills.

Bei Tai had taught Xia Xiaolei a set of simple military combat techniques. After that, Xia Xiaolei had fervently hugged a sandbag to train his fists every day.

A few days later, Chen Xiaolian's phone received a message.

The message was from his school's class monitor.

The message informed him that... he needed to report to school soon. Additionally, it also informed him about the schedule for reporting to school on a certain day and a reminder on how much tuition fees was needed...

...

“School?”

Chen Xiaolian entered a trance for a moment. Then, he smiled. “I... should I go?”

Xia Xiaolei loosened the sandbag and wheezed. Then, he walked over to

gulp down a bottle of water. "Guild Leader, what is it?"

"Nothing," Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

Looking at Xia Xiaolei's innocent face, Chen Xiaolian suddenly broke into a smile. "I was thinking about something just now."

He spoke in a melancholic voice. "After getting sucked into this world, we had to fight while putting our lives on the line. Wasn't it so we could protect our original way of life? If we utterly give up on our original lives, family, emotions... if we were to give up on all of those, then what meaning is there to our struggles? Do we keep on fighting and killing to stay alive only to repeat the process again and again? Until the day we die? What meaning is there in such a life?"

He stood up and spoke loudly. "Everyone, I have made my decision!"

Chen Xiaolian laughed loudly. "Tomorrow, I am going to continue with my schooling days!"

—

1 Frostmourne. A weapon used by the last boss in the mmorpg game Wrath of the Lich King (World of Warcraft).

Chapter 167: Return to Hangzhou

Chen Xiaolian was personally not too concerned about returning to school.

His academic performance was neither excellent nor bad. He was neither an academic high scorer nor a delinquent. He had considered it before – with his achievements, getting the first band results for the college entrance exams might be too much of a stretch. However, getting up to the second band should not be a problem.

He had never placed much importance upon these matters. After all, he had already found a relatively safe career – writing novels.

By writing novels, he had gained a considerable sum of income. Even if he were to stay at home and write novels for his career instead of going to school, he would not end up hungry. His royalties each year would go up to several hundred thousand yuans. That was enough to meet the needs of living for him.

Thus, academic performance had never been a source of pressure for Chen Xiaolian.

However...

He still hated going to school.

As for the reason... if he were to say it out, many people would end up feeling dismal.

The reason was the school uniforms!

...

Due to many complicated factors and aspects, the majority of the public high schools in China made uniforms compulsory. This was especially so for those located within the city where the regulations were more stringent.

Once school was open, he would be required to wear the school uniform with coarse texture and loose cutting design. Its beetle-like style was

seemingly made with zero aesthetics in mind. For Chen Xiaolian, it was a form of torture.

Wearing school uniforms was not the problem... as long as the design was somewhat beautiful; most people would not be opposed to it.

Take the Japanese school uniforms for instance... the more you look at it, the more attractive it would seem!

Be it the boy's collared school uniforms or the girl's sailor type uniforms, both exuded an atmosphere of youth.

Yet, the school uniforms for China's high school were hideous – each more unsightly than the other. It was as though they were competing to see which of them could reach the lowest level of aesthetics possible!

According to an explanation found on the internet, there was a reason why the uniform for China's public high school was designed to be so ugly. That reason was... to give the students wearing them an unpleasant image so as to prevent romance between adolescents.

What a preposterous reason!

Unfortunately for Chen Xiaolian, the school he attended was one of those high schools. Moreover, it was one with a strict level of regulation.

In the morning, just before he went to school; the two brothers Lun Tai and Bei Tai and also Xia Xiaolei watched as Chen Xiaolian stepped out of his room wearing a white and green striped uniform...

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai held nothing back and broke into a riot of laughter.

That was especially the case with Bei Tai, who pointed at Chen Xiaolian while laughing to the point of convulsing. Anymore and the corners of his mouth would probably reach his ears.

“Guild Leader, do you know how pathetic you look in that uniform?” Bei Tai continued laughing raucously. “I truly feel sorry for those Special Assault Team members who were beaten by you back in the Tokyo instance dungeon!”

The cutting of the uniform was extremely loose with almost zero gender difference. The uniform for both boys and girls shared the same baggy look.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and picked up his bag before heading out. Before leaving, he turned to Xia Xiaolei. "If anything happens, give me a call."

...

There was nothing much to talk about regarding the first day of school.

Chen Xiaolian's class was in Year Three of the senior stage (Four) and the ratio between male and females in the class was quite balanced.

As he walked into the school, he saw the childish and inexperienced faces of those around him who also wore the green and white striped uniforms. The sight gave him the urge to turn around and make a break for it.

It appeared that... he was somewhat unable to adapt to it.

After handing over the tuition fees, he received the study materials.

Then, he went to his seat and sat there with a blank expression on his face.

In the class, his classmates were chatting – some were discussing where they went for vacation while others were discussing about cram lessons.

They were in their third year after all. For those students with high aspirations, this was the first major hurdle in life.

As for Chen Xiaolian – a blank expression on his face...

He turned to look at the vacant seat at the back of his row – that was Roddy's seat.

The brat had not reappeared. Chen Xiaolian could not help but feel slightly worried about him.

The homeroom teacher was a rough looking middle-aged man – looking at his outward appearance, no one would believe that he was an educated scholar, an advanced Chinese language teacher with a solid foundation.

Seeing his outward appearance, one would mistake him as a sports teacher.

Chen Xiaolian did not pay much attention to what the teacher was saying as it mostly pertained to the matters of the third year of senior stage and the upcoming college entrance examination.

Before the first lesson began, they had to participate in radio calisthenics.

Chen Xiaolian followed his group down the building and into the sports field. As he was relatively shorter than most, he had to walk in front.

Listening to the familiar music for the radio calisthenics activity, he felt himself becoming like a toad as he jumped around.

At that moment however, Chen Xiaolian discovered the appearance of two familiar figures!

Lun Tai and Bei Tai!

The two fellows were standing at the edge of the sports field, beside the school canteen. They held on to their arms and laughed with abandon. Bei Tai was laughing so hard he nearly fell down onto the ground!

Chen Xiaolian nearly spat out blood due to anger!

Most infuriatingly, Bei Tai actually went so far as to produce a mobile phone to snap a few pictures!

When the time came for them to rest, Chen Xiaolian rushed out and met up with Lun Tai and Bei Tai at the edge of the sports field.

“Why did you two come over?” Chen Xiaolian dragged the two of them to the back of the sports field.

“Ha ha ha ha ha ha... it is too funny! Guild Leader! This is just too funny!” Bei Tai laughed as he waved his mobile phone around. “I could never have expected such a side from you!”

Within the photos taken through the mobile phone, Chen Xiaolian could be seen jumping around like a toad while wearing the beetle like green and white striped uniform.

“Those monsters killed by you in the Tokyo instance dungeon... if they could see this side of you, they will probably crawl their way out from Hell.”

“Did you two specifically come here to make fun of me?” Chen Xiaolian scowled.

Lun Tai replied with a serious tone. “That is correct! That is exactly why we are here.”

“... ..”

As Chen Xiaolian was messing around with the two of them, a cab came to a halt before the school entrance. A youngster stepped out of the cab while carrying a backpack.

After he walked into the sports field, Chen Xiaolian and his group turned over and cast their gazes onto the youngster.

...

“Roddy!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly loosened his arm, that was gripping onto Bei Tai’s neck and he shouted loudly before running over.

Roddy simply stood there. His face revealed exhaustion; however, he smiled and let his backpack fall down the ground. Then, after letting out a laugh, he walked toward Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian hugged him tightly before giving a heavy blow on his shoulder, nearly knocking him down the ground. Roddy massaged his shoulder with an expression of pain. “We just met up. Must you be so cruel?”

“Where did you run off to?” Chen Xiaolian scowled, his expression showing agitation. “You even closed off your mobile phone! Do you know how worried we were?”

Roddy laughed, revealing a white set of teeth. “I am back now, aren’t I?”

He then greeted Lun Tai and Bei Tai and exchanged some words with them.

Chen Xiaolian looked into Roddy's eyes and asked tentatively. "You... found her?"

Roddy turned silent for a moment and the smile on his face faded. Then , he slowly nodded his head. "I found her."

Pausing, he gave a bittersweet smile. "She... she is doing well."

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He only looked at Roddy while patting him on the shoulder.

...

According to Roddy, he had found Nicole in an old European country.

She lived in a small agricultural village where everything appeared calm.

Naturally, Nicole could not remember Roddy or anything related to her Awakened life.

For the past few days, Roddy had been like a stalker, secretly peeping at Nicole every day.

He watched her go through her peaceful life as she head to work every day. Occasionally, she would go to the town park to rest and feed the pigeons.

...

"You did not approach her?" Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

Roddy sighed. "I really wanted to. However, after thinking about it, I decided not to."

"... .." Chen Xiaolian looked into Roddy's eyes.

Roddy's expression revealed his feelings of distress. "Even if I did approach her, then what? Strike up a conversation with her? Get to know her? Be friends with her? Then what? Our current state and life is one that is miles away from hers. She is already an ordinary person. Even if... what happens after that? I may have to enter an instance dungeon on that very day and die. We are now inhabitants of two different worlds. If I get

together with her, I will only bring problems into her life.”

They sat inside a rock garden behind the school’s sports field. There, Chen Xiaolian sat by Roddy’s side while Lun Tai and Bei Tai sat on a piece of rock.

It was already time for class and there was no one else within the sports field.

“I did not expect you to return to school.”

“I did not expect you to return to school either.”

The two youngsters looked at each other and revealed a smile of tacit understanding.

“It seems that our choice is the same,” Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Roddy spoke in a whisper. “This is the only place where I can feel... truly alive.”

After saying that, Roddy stood up and said. “Come on; let us head back to class. I have yet to hand in my tuition fees. As for you, going absent on your first day, you are in for a scolding.”

The two of them laughed.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai informed them that the two of them will be heading back and bring Xia Xiaolei to continue his training in the fitness centre.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy went back to the class together.

As expected, the first lesson was the language lesson by the homeroom teacher. Chen Xiaolian was thoroughly lectured by the teacher. Roddy on the other hand, smiled as he produced a medical certificate for sick leave that he had prepared beforehand. Thus, he was able to waltz through the hurdle.

Thus, Chen Xiaolian was punished to stand alone for the first class.

During the period of time between lessons, Chen Xiaolian complained to Roddy. “You cunning bastard, to think that you would have a medical certificate prepared.

“Be careful, going absent on the first day will surely earn you a spot in the teacher’s blacklist.”

However, during the second lesson... something unexpected occurred.

As the mathematics teacher was drawing a geometric pattern on the blackboard, Chen Xiaolian’s mobile phone suddenly rang.

The classroom was originally silent. The unexpected ringing sound from the mobile phone thus attracted a great deal of glances from the students. Several of the boys secretly gave Chen Xiaolian a glance, which conveyed the words ‘you’ve got guts’.

Sure enough, the thin female mathematics teacher slapped the ruler down onto the table and she furiously shouted. “How many times have I said it? Do not turn on your mobile phones when in class! Who is it? Hurry up and turn it off!”

Chen Xiaolian hastily pulled out the mobile phone. After taking a glance at it, he lost his composure.

The incoming call was from Hangzhou.

“Are you still not going to turn it off?” The mathematics teacher glowered at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian sighed inwardly and let out a bitter smile as he stood up. Then, he rushed out of the door. “I am sorry teacher, it is an emergency!”

“Hey! What are you doing? Where are you going? You!”

Chen Xiaolian stepped into the corridor and answered the phone.

“Hello?”

“Hello, are you Chen Xiaolian?”

It was an unknown voice, but one that contained seriousness.

“Err, I am he,” Chen Xiaolian was momentarily surprised.

“I am calling from Hangzhou City XX District XX police station,” This person’s voice sounded grave. “Do you know of someone called Da Gang?”

Da Gang?

Chen Xiaolian immediately answered. "I know, he is my friend."

"Then, would it be convenient for you to come over for a bit? Something happened to your friend. There are some matters that we need you to help out with," The other person said in a very cautious manner. "Your number is the only one we can find in his phone book."

Chen Xiaolian's heart gave a thump!

"Excuse me, what happened to him?" Chen Xiaolian frowned.

"He is involved in a physical injury case," The other person spoke in a considerate tone. "He was hurt and is now in the hospital..."

"I will head over immediately! Please give me the address!" Without showing any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian decided.

...

As Chen Xiaolian was walking into the classroom, the mathematics teacher glowered angrily at him.

However, she then saw Chen Xiaolian walking to his seat to pack his things into his bag before quickly running out again.

"Hey! What are you doing?" The mathematics teacher became livid.

"Teacher, I have an emergency!" Chen Xiaolian replied without looking back.

Before the mathematics teacher could say anything, Roddy too grabbed his backpack and ran out.

"And what do you think you are doing?"

"Teacher! I may have to go save the world!"

Mathematics teacher: "..."

Save... the world???

...

As Chen Xiaolian was rushing out of the school building, Roddy managed to catch up to him.

“What happened?”

“There has been an incident. I need to go to Hangzhou,” Chen Xiaolian thought about it. “Why did you come?”

Roddy looked at him and smiled wryly. “Hangzhou? It must be something to do with Han Bi then?”

“No, I made a new friend in Hangzhou. Something happened to him.”

Roddy sighed. “I will go with you then. Besides, there is nothing going on in school.”

Chen Xiaolian considered the matter.

However, before he could say anything, his mobile phone rang again.

It was an unknown phone number from Hangzhou.

“Hello?”

“Roddy? Is that you?”

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

However, he quickly recognized the voice as Yu Jiajia’s.

As to why Yu Jiajia had called him Roddy... he quickly recalled that it was his own doing.

“How did you get my number?”

“I...” Yu Jiajia’s voice was filled with anxiety and tears. “Something has happened to Da Gang. In the hospital – before he lost consciousness, I asked him if there is anyone who could help. He gave me this number. I... I...”

The girl was about to break into tears.

Chen Xiaolian’s face instantly distorted. “How is he?”

“The surgery had just finished. He is still in intensive care,” From her voice, it was clear that she was sobbing. “You... can you...”

“I am coming over immediately,” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. “Do not hang up first. Calm down and tell me what happened.”

As he spoke, he made a few gestures toward Roddy. Roddy quickly understood and pulled out his own mobile phone to buy train tickets for Hangzhou.

Through the phone, Yu Jiajia's voice sounded flustered.

"Da Gang... he was stabbed. Wu wu wu wu... the doctor said that he lost too much blood. He is now in a dangerous situation. He might end up dying."

...

—

[Trivia: The college entrance exam they take after Year 3 of the senior stage decides which college they will go to (or none) and is a very important turning point for public students in China.]

Chapter 168: Using My Methods

The train trip to Hangzhou took only half an hour.

During the afternoon of the very same day. Chen Xiaolian and Roddy arrived at XX Hospital in Hangzhou.

Chen Xiaolian did not say much on their way there. However, Roddy could sense fury within the atmosphere of silence surrounding Chen Xiaolian.

After arriving at the hospital, they entered the Intensive Care Unit ward and saw two police officers.

Watching Chen Xiaolian walking in, one of the police officers quickly stood up.

“I am Chen Xiaolian,” Chen Xiaolian immediately introduced himself. “You are the one...”

“You are Chen Xiaolian?” The younger of the two police officers nodded his head. He looked at Chen Xiaolian and said. “I was the one who called you earlier.”

Chen Xiaolian was able to recognize the officer’s voice.

“You are a student?” The police officer seemed somewhat surprised.

In his haste to come over, Chen Xiaolian did not have the time to return home and change his clothes. Thus, he was currently in his school uniform.

He also had a fair and immature looking face, resulting in an unconvincing image.

The police appeared disappointed after seeing that.

“I am Da Gang’s friend,” Chen Xiaolian said while considering the situation. “I may be his only friend. His circumstance is rather complicated, his parents...”

“We are already informed of his circumstance,” The police officer smiled bitterly. “What I meant was – does he not have any other

relatives? I mean to say... older people, adults.”

“Probably none,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

He recalled how Da Gang had to live by himself inside the dilapidated hut. It was a bitter and gruelling life.

If Da Gang had any other relatives, how could they have ignored his plight?

“Is that so,” The police officer sighed, his face revealing traces of distress. “In that case, I fear that you two will not be able to help out much with this matter.”

At that instant, an excited voice rang out from the corridor.

“Roddy! You are here!”

Yu Jiajia dashed out from the corridor behind Chen Xiaolian. Seeing Chen Xiaolian, she ran over, her eyes red.

Roddy was stunned.

He watched as an unknown but beautiful girl ran over with reddened eyes while shouting his name.

His mouth hung low as he stood there staring at the girl...

Without even giving Roddy a glance, Yu Jiajia ran past him, flew into the arms of Chen Xiaolian, and started crying.

“Wu wu wu wu, Roddy, Roddy, you are finally here... Da Gang is badly hurt! Wu wu wu wu... ...”

Roddy went nuts.

He had just watched as a beauty threw herself into Chen Xiaolian’s arms. Then... the name that came out of her mouth was his?

Feeling awkward, Chen Xiaolian quickly extricated himself from Yu Jiajia’s embrace before pulling her over to the side. There, he found a place for them to sit down.

“All right, stop crying. First, I need you to tell me what happened. Tell me everything slowly!”

...

Half an hour later...

Chen Xiaolian stood outside the Intensive Care Unit ward. Peeking through the transparent window, he observed Da Gang who was lying on the bed.

Da Gang's head was bandaged and plaster cast had been applied to both his arms.

There were several medical instruments beside the bed. One of them was a heart monitor giving off beeping sounds, indicating the heart rate detected.

Chen Xiaolian's eyebrows were furrowed and traces of hostility leaked out from his eyes.

...

The matter was not too complicated.

More accurately, this matter was connected to that morning incident from a few days ago.

This morning, Yu Jiajia headed to school as usual.

As it so happened, she did not let the chauffeur drive her to school. Instead, she used the subway to head to school.

If she had not used the subway and had let the chauffeur drive her, this incident may not have happened.

The moment she arrived at the subway station near the school, Yu Jiajia had been tailed all the way until she reached the alley near the school. There, she was surrounded by a group of people.

Those fellows were clearly well prepared and they blocked off both sides of the alley.

For the past few days, Yu Jiajia had not been riding her car to school. Instead, she chose to make the trip herself.

Every morning, she would buy breakfast, go through the alley to find Da

Gang and deliver the breakfast to him.

This was the only way she could think of to repay Da Gang.

Thus, she fell into the trap.

Those fellows objective was not only her... more accurately, it was Da Gang.

Yu Jiajia's escape route was blocked off and she struggled to run away.

Hearing the sound of struggles, Da Gang ran out.

What happened next was very straightforward.

The two fellows with broken wrists recognized Da Gang and their entire group beat Da Gang up in retaliation.

According to Yu Jiajia, Da Gang originally had the chance to escape.

However, he did not do so. Instead, he bravely chose to fight those fellows – he tried to get Yu Jiajia to escape together.

Those fellows were wielding weapons – steel pipes and knives.

During the fight, Da Gang's head was struck and his body ended up being stabbed twice.

As they were beating him, Da Gang grabbed Yu Jiajia and they rushed out of the alley. Those fellows gave chase and in the process, one of them kicked Da Gang into the street. Then, an incoming car knocked him over.

According to her, the force behind the collision was huge. Da Gang who was hit fell down the ground immediately and blood flowed out non-stop.

Those fellows saw that more and more people were gathering as a result and they quickly ran off.

By the time Da Gang was sent to the hospital, his mind was already delirious.

Chen Xiaolian then inquired about Da Gang's injuries.

At the current, the diagnosis result was – six fractures, two internal bleeding, concussion and the two stab wounds.

As for the attackers, they had gotten away. At present, their whereabouts were unknown.

...

"It's the two fellows from a few days back, the ones whose wrists were broken by you," Yu Jiajia informed Chen Xiaolian. "I recognized them. They were the ones leading the group."

Chen Xiaolian remained silent and stood there. He silently observed Da Gang who was lying inside the ward.

Truth be told, Chen Xiaolian and Da Gang's friendship was not that deep. However, he felt an inexplicable feeling of silent understanding.

It was an indescribable form of silent understanding.

Perhaps... Chen Xiaolian was not simply feeling a sense of compassion toward Da Gang's pitiful life.

Rather, it was a form of... empathy.

That feeling of loneliness, that feeling of being left alone with no one to lean on, that touching feeling.

"I get it," Chen Xiaolian looked at Yu Jiajia and said in a warm tone. "You must have received a shock, right? Go back home and rest. I will take care of the matters here."

"No... I want to stay behind," Yu Jiajia shook her head. "In the first place, I am the reason why this happened at all. I..."

"It is not because of you," Chen Xiaolian said softly. "Scum is scum. No matter where they go, they will end up doing evil deeds; and you just happened to be their victim. That is why you should not feel guilty. Back then, even if the one in the alley was not you and was someone else, they will still harass that person."

"I..."

"All right, then," Chen Xiaolian turned around and looked at Yu Jiajia. Her eyes were red and swollen, and her sound hoarse. Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment before extending his hand out to pat her shoulder

and said in a whisper. "Go back and rest for a while. You cannot keep on staying watch over here. Go back and take a rest. If you still want to come here, you must do so only after you have taken a nap. En, it is decided then."

Before Yu Jiajia could say anything else, Chen Xiaolian let out a laugh. "My friend and I came over in a hurry, so we did not have the time to eat anything. If you really feel bad, then please go home, get some rest and bring over something for us to eat when you come over later. Oh, right. As you know, I am not a local resident here. As such, I will have to trouble you for the matters pertaining to the police. I cannot help out in that regard. As for Da Gang, it is likely that he does not have any relatives."

"En, I will take care of the police side of things," Yu Jiajia firmly rubbed away her tears. "I have already made a call. My chauffeur and the people from the company will handle the police side of things. They will definitely get those bastards captured! We cannot let those people escape!"

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

Yu Jiajia looked at Chen Xiaolian and hesitated. She bit down on her lips. "I..."

"You go back first," Chen Xiaolian replied softly. "Like I said before, if you really feel bad, then help take care of the police matters for Da Gang. Then... later, send over something for us to eat. Right, we will be counting on you for those matters."

Chen Xiaolian understood that it would not be possible to get Yu Jiajia to just head home. Since that was the case, he might as well get her to do something so that she could feel slightly better.

"One more thing," Chen Xiaolian looked at Yu Jiajia and hesitated for a bit before asking in a low tone. "Have you already made your statement? Have the police officers questioned you about the case?"

"The statement has yet to be done. I followed them to this hospital and there was not enough time to investigate anything. Some police officers followed us. They asked me some questions but back then, I was too

scared. So, I did not say much.”

“Hmm, what did you tell them?” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes glinted and he solemnly asked Yu Jiajia.

Seemingly a little fearful, Yu Jiajia answered in a whisper. “I simply said that I am acquainted with Da Gang. Then, I told them about the fellows who beat Da Gang and about the incident where I was harassed.”

She suddenly raised her head. “I have not told the police about what happened last time. I did not mention that they were probably here for revenge because you saved me last time by beating up the two fellows – I did not reveal those things,” Pausing, Yu Jiajia whispered. “I thought that I should meet up with you before telling the police about those matters. I... I recall you saying that you do not want to deal with the police.”

“Thank you,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “In other words, presently, the police do not know that those fellows came looking for revenge?”

“For now, they still do not know.”

“Good,” Chen Xiaolian pondered it through and said. “Then, can I ask a favour from you?”

“What is it?”

“This matter... I want to deal with it myself,” Chen Xiaolian answered coolly. “I think I know how the police will handle this matter. They will capture those fellows, lock them up for a few days and give them a certain amount of fine. Additionally, if they have some connections, they can use those connections and may be able to come up with something like a medical parole, probation or something to the effect... of course, that is only my speculation. I cannot be certain. However, I want to avoid having this unpleasant scenario. So, I want to take care of this matter myself – using my methods.”

Chapter 169: Boss Duan's Troubles

Yu Jiajia's eyes widened. "You... you cannot be thinking of... breaking the law..."

"Shh," Chen Xiaolian smiled softly. "Can you help do me this favour?"

Looking at Yu Jiajia's concerned expression, Chen Xiaolian softly added. "I know where to draw the line."

Yu Jiajia hesitated for a moment and bit down on her lips.

It would appear that this girl had made up her mind.

"This morning, I called up the company. They told me not to say anything to the police first and they will send the chauffeur and their lawyers over. So... you can be at ease, I know what to say," Yu Jiajia took a deep breath. "I will say... I do not know those criminals and that I have never seen them before."

After saying that, she tightly gripped Chen Xiaolian's arm. "However, you have to promise me! You must not do anything that is too dangerous! If... if you do anything impulsive, then I would rather tell everything to the police!"

...

After successfully persuading Yu Jiajia to leave, Chen Xiaolian sat on the chair by the corridor.

Roddy came over, sat down beside him and handed a bottle of water to Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian unscrewed the bottle and gulped down a mouthful of water.

"Finally managed to coax the little beauty to go away?" Roddy said in a rather playful tone. "It seems you are hiding something from me, Xiaolian. Hmm... secretly hooking up with a little beauty in Hangzhou. Additionally, you even had the gall to use my name to deceive her! You bastard! You committed adultery and left my name instead, what a vicious

move!”

Chen Xiaolian turned his head to look at Roddy. “Thank you.”

“Eh?”

“I know, you intentionally said those things to cheer me up,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. He kneaded his face and said. “Actually, I am not feeling sad right now.”

His eyes became distant and he continued. “Perhaps I was somewhat a little anxious when we were coming over. I did feel a little worried. However, once we arrived and I saw Da Gang lying inside, I suddenly feel at ease.

“The reason I could feel at ease is probably due to that fact that we are no longer the same people as before. Da Gang’s injuries are severe. However, as long as he did not die, I can use the Healing Beast Blood from the system to help him recover.

“As for those problems... in my opinion, people like us would not face too much difficulty in trying to solve those problems.”

“It is good that you can think that way,” Roddy gave a sigh of relief.

“This change in mentality is something I am still unable to get used to,” Chen Xiaolian frowned and attempted to assess himself. “My mind is still feeling suffocated. I feel this rage somewhere, but I do not know how to give vent to it. It feels as though I am simply punching into a clump of cotton.”

The police did not come to question Chen Xiaolian anymore... after the basic questions earlier, the police gave up on questioning Chen Xiaolian anymore. After all, he was an outsider and merely a friend.

On the surface, it would appear that this case had nothing to do with him.

Truth be told, when the police had called him up, there were not only trying to investigate the case, they were also doing so at the hospital’s request. Due to how heavy Da Gang’s injuries were, the hospital needed

his family members to come forward.

However, Da Gang had no family members. He only had one friend, Chen Xiaolian.

“Back then, I had already inquired about it. The hospital treatment fees have all been paid for by the girl from earlier,” Roddy looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Who is that girl? And what is her connection to you?”

His tone turned somewhat serious. “Did you do anything wrong by Qiao Qiao?”

Chen Xiaolian smiled. “Stop spouting nonsense. This girl... hmm, her name is Yu Jiajia. There is nothing between us.”

“Hmph! Nothing? The moment she saw you, she flew into your arms,” Roddy laughed. “Back then, I should have taken a picture and sent it to Qiao Qiao.”

At the mention of Qiao Qiao, Chen Xiaolian’s expression turned absent-minded.

As he was still unable to contact Qiao Qiao, he was unable to answer this problem.

Noticing the strange reaction in Chen Xiaolian’s expression, Roddy hesitated. “You... did something happen between you and Qiao Qiao?”

“Nothing,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head and stood up. “What time is it now?”

“Half past one,” Roddy looked at his watch. “What are you planning?”

“To do something!” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth. “Last time, I did not handle things properly. Since I am here, I will do what needs to be done.”

“Do something?” Roddy raised an eyebrow. “What do you plan on doing?”

“You stay here and keep an eye on things. Originally, I had intended to give him a Healing Beast Blood immediately. However, after thinking things through, it does not feel right. The police are still working on this case; they will come to find him. Besides, he was just saved from danger.

Considering how heavy his injuries are, if he is to suddenly get well, it will only arouse the suspicion of others. We will not be able to explain the situation to both the hospital and the police. So, for now, you need to stay here to keep an eye on his situation. As long as his situation is stable, there is no need to give him the medicinal substance yet. However, if his situation turns critical... then forget about it and just give him the medicinal substance. After that, think of something to take him away!"

"That is simple," Roddy nodded his head. "What about you?"

"I will go look for someone," Chen Xiaolian said coolly. "Looking for the criminals."

Roddy was not worried. After the fight they had to undergo in Tokyo, these bunch of rogues were not something worth worrying about.

...

Chen Xiaolian quickly left the hospital. Flagging down a cab, he reached the internet café located near the school and began to look for information.

Searching for those people should not prove too difficult.

Although Chen Xiaolian do not know their names, he was clear that these people who like to frequent internet cafes would often come to the same area.

Chen Xiaolian walked around the school; he visited several internet cafes and asked around by describing the appearance and clothes worn by those two fellows.

Those scoundrels who like to dye their hair had very distinctive facial features.

Additionally... Chen Xiaolian also offered money.

In a certain internet café, Chen Xiaolian forked out a thousand yuans and acquired some information from the manager in charge and a customer.

The two fellows' names were 'Little Cotton' and 'Fertile Fatty'.

Clearly, those were nicknames. However, things would be easier with nicknames.

According to the information he obtained, the two of them would often appear in a barbeque shop within a night market. There were plenty of people who knew those two there.

After obtaining the information, Chen Xiaolian made a call to Roddy in the hospital and inquired about Da Gang's situation. After being informed that Da Gang was doing well, Chen Xiaolian told Roddy.

"I will be back a little later."

...

During dinner, Chen Xiaolian simply went to the barbeque shop within the night market. Although the night market had yet to begin, the dinner business there was quite good.

First, Chen Xiaolian had ordered some food for himself. Seating himself at a corner table, he observed the surroundings for a moment.

Then, he went over to a nearby table of guests that exuded a 'gang atmosphere'.

Going to table, Chen Xiaolian inquired about the two fellows and noticed the vigilance shown by the guests of the table. One of the guests glared at Chen Xiaolian and asked back in a savage tone. "Who are you? Why are you asking about them?"

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

A few minutes later, the shop was turned upside down.

Those fellows were beaten to the point where they were sprawled on the ground. As for the fellow who had glared at Chen Xiaolian, he was kicked out of the shop and into the alley behind the shop.

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian did not forget to hand over some money to the shop owner as compensation for the broken items.

...

“Normally, I am quite the easy-going person. However, I am presently not in a good mood. And don’t even ask me about my temper.”

Chen Xiaolian trampled the fellow down onto the ground. Next, in front of the fellow’s eyes, he twisted a steel pipe to the point where it became twisted dough. “I will give you three seconds to consider. If you decide not to talk, then the same thing is going to happen to your legs.”

The fellow was scared stiff.

“I will talk! I will talk! I am not that familiar with them! I have only drunk with them once! They are working for Boss Duan!”

“Who is this Boss Duan?”

“Boss Duan... Boss Duan is someone involved in big business,” The fellow stared at the twisted steel pipe in Chen Xiaolian’s hand and he felt his mind breaking down.

“Big business?” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “I happen to love doing big business. Talk, what kind of business is Boss Duan involved in?”

...

Chen Xiaolian was able to quickly suss out what the big business was.

The Boss Duan had opened up a real estate company nearby.

It had a very grand name... however, it was simply involved in some minor outsourcing services.

Those services include: Demolition and the transportation of debris for the construction site.

These hoodlums of society specialized in the demolition business. Chen Xiaolian instantly understood what that meant.

He believed that there was a high chance that he had found it.

...

Truth be told, Boss Duan’s surname was not Duan.

Very few people knew what his surname was. ‘Boss Duan’ was actually a nickname. Due to his love for wuxia movies, it was said that he spent

several years in the south as a dragon-tiger martial artist [1]. Ten years ago, he returned to Hangzhou and established this company with a group of people.

Due to his love for wuxia movies, in addition to his experience as a dragon-tiger martial artist, the people of the underworld gave him a nickname: First of the Four Evils.

It was a reference to Duan Yanqing, the 'Overflowing Evil' from 'Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils'. It meant that his actions were more vicious compared to the Duan Yanqing from the novel [2].

His company was named 'Goldenhorse Real Estate Development Company'. It was said that Boss Duan was born in the year of the horse. [3]

As for the company's scope of operations... development of real estate was not possible as he simply do not possess that ability.

Their operations involved helping immoral developers to repossess or acquire property by threatening the residents and engaging in demolition activities. Thus, the men he hired were all the layabouts of society, the thugs and bullies.

Following his company's growth, Boss Duan was able to develop his company. It was now in the building materials business.

Simply put, his company now supplied sand and cement to the construction site; and also transport debris away.

For this company to navigate its way within this business, most of the men he hired had crooked backgrounds.

From this perspective, Boss Duan's business could be considered quite something.

Today, Boss Duan was feeling somewhat irritable.

He felt that he might have caused a problem.

Last night, he had been drinking all the way until dawn. Then, he inadvertently found out about something.

Among his group of men, there were two known as Little Cotton and Fertile Fatty.

The two of them work for his company. When intimidation work was necessary, he will send them out to commit those dirty tasks.

He found out that the two of them encountered an incident a few days back and were badly beaten up.

While drinking, he inquired about it and found out that a school brat had beaten up the two idiots; the school brat had also broken their wrists.

Truth be told, Boss Duan was not someone with a deep sense of solidarity.

However, he drank too much last night.

Having drunk too much, his desire to act like a boss from the pugilistic world rushed to the surface. He took it upon himself and exhibited a 'who dares to bully this senior's younger brother?' attitude.

Back then, his underlings all gave him a huge applause and all of them praised Boss Duan for his righteous spirit.

Boss Duan got carried away and continued gulping down three cups of wine in succession.

In his state of inebriation, he instructed his men to go help the two fellows!

Naturally, he did not go with them. After he finished drinking, he went to his mistress' house and slept with her.

When he woke up, he found out that those fellows had escalated the matter.

Those bunch of brain damaged idiots!

To teach a school brat a lesson, all you need to do is intimidate that fellow a little! After that, extort some money from him! Is that not wonderful?

You bunch of mindless idiots!

According to what he heard, the fellow that was beaten up was badly hurt and was knocked over by a car. Dead or alive – his current condition remained unknown. That was a huge problem from Boss Duan.

Considering his present level of connections, some small issues would not be too hard to settle. All that was needed to be done was to find the victim and intimidate him.

However, once someone died... then, the whole thing could no longer be covered up!

He had yet to have that much influence.

He regretted drinking too much last night, regretted trying to put on the airs of a boss, regretting saying too much.

Those who went along to exact vengeance were all drunk as well, causing the matter to blow up!

Boss Duan was throwing a fit in the company. Thankfully, those fools had the mind to run back instead of getting caught right there.

As for how to deal with this, Boss Duan already had a plan in mind. The two idiots, Little Cotton and Fertile Fatty would definitely be recognized. It would be difficult for them to run away. If the police came looking for them, then he could only pass the buck and have those two kicked out.

Boss Duan also had some assurances toward the possibility of this affecting his company.

He would figure out who the victims were and use the carrot and stick method to make sure the other party do not pursue this matter.

Fortunately, he did not join in last night and could distance himself from the issue.

If all else fails, I will just have to spend some more money or throw out those two fellows to act as scapegoats.

Son of a bitch! I really should cut down on drinking alcohol!

For the sake of two underlings worth less than fart, he had to deal with so much trouble. Later on, there may even be a need for him to spend

money to settle the situation.

Isn't this just asking for it?

Damn it, this senior had only held up the values of solidarity this once. It would appear that I would need to cut down on solidarity as well.

Boss Duan was throwing a fit at his underlings inside his company.

That was especially the case for Little Cotton and Fertile Fatty. They were forced down the ground and Boss Duan kicked them several times.

"Idiots! What is the point in stabbing someone? What is wrong with just extorting some money from them? You are just inviting trouble for me!"

At that moment, a loud sound suddenly rang out from the outside.

Crash!

It was the sound of glass being shattered.

...

Boss Duan's company was located beside a construction site.

Beside a simple looking building was a row of dump trucks.

There were at least 30 people inside the building. Several pool tables were set up inside the first floor while some were in the corner playing poker. Some were putting down bets on the game.

Hearing the sound of glass shattering, Boss Duan was the first to rush out of his office. He went to stand by the fence on the second floor and looked down.

What he saw was a lean looking youngster standing beside the row of dump trucks.

He was wearing a loosely cut green and white striped uniform. In his hand was a hammer... it was likely he had helped himself to the hammer from the site.

The youngster stood beside the dump truck; he then raised his head and his gaze happened to meet Boss Duan's.

The window of the dump truck beside the youngster had been shattered.

“Damn it!” Boss Duan was immediately infuriated. “Where did this little bastard come from? Son of a bitch! Are you people dead? Hurry up and go over there!”

—

Boss Duan. Raw: ‘段老大’, pinyin: ‘duàn lǎodà’. ‘duàn’ (段) means segment, ‘lǎodà’ (老大) means boss.

1 Dragon-tiger martial artists. Despite its grand name, it is actually the title for those people who act as minions in wuxia movies... basically, those people who cannot recognize Mt. Tai.

2 Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils is another famous wuxia novel by Jinyong/ Louis Cha. Duan Yanqing is one of the main villains in the novel.

3 Chinese people assign an animal to each year in a repeating twelve-year cycle.

Chapter 170: Chen Xiaolian's Concerns

Half an hour later...

Boss Duan lay sprawling on the ground, whimpering and rolling about with his left hand clutching onto his right wrist. All around him, 20 or so people were lying on the ground – all suffering from the same fate.

Everyone's right hand was smashed by the hammer.

Despite the ruthlessness of his attacks, Chen Xiaolian had held back so as to not kill anyone. Instead, he broke one of their hands. Considering that he had used a hammer to do so, it would be difficult for them to recover from this. It was likely that they would have to live with this disability for the rest of their lives.

Chen Xiaolian casually walked to the side. However, he did not leave. Instead, he dragged the hammer with him to the side where the row of dump trucks were parked.

He took his time and smashed the glasses of each of those dump trucks. Next, he opened up their hoods...

Hearing the booming sounds coming over again and again, Boss Duan who was lying on the ground felt his heart shattering apart. Grief filled his heart and blood dripped out as an extreme amount of pain seared through his flesh; a pain that exceeded the pain on his wrist.

Chen Xiaolian's actions were incredibly vicious. He actually smashed down the engines of each of those dump trucks, causing them to break.

The most important part of the dump truck was the engine. If the engine was damaged, the cost of replacing them was almost the equivalent of buying up a new dump truck. For Boss Duan's debris transportation business, the row of dump trucks could be regarded as a major part of his assets. In order to earn money, he would need to rely on those dump trucks. Money was needed to support his underlings, the people who would be sent to assist those immoral real estate developers and commit acts of intimidation and destruction.

If only the windows and body surface of the dump trucks were smashed, it could still be considered a minor problem. However, once the engines were smashed apart, the losses incurred would be immense!

After doing all that, Chen Xiaolian carried the hammer with him and walked toward Boss Duan.

Boss Duan was scared witless; he endured the pain and shouted. "Mercy! Mercy!"

"I will not kill you," Chen Xiaolian said coolly. "I still need to tell you why this unfortunate incident happened to you. This morning's incident was perpetrated by your underlings, right? Well, then. I am here to inform you that you have provoked someone you should not have. Everything that is happening now is your just desserts."

"I accept defeat! I accept defeat!" Boss Duan was a veteran of the underworld and he was quick to understand the current situation. "I accept defeat! My dear friend..."

"I am not your friend."

"Yes yes yes, I am not qualified to call you my friend," Boss Duan replied in a tearful voice. "Please sheath you blade. Tomorrow, I will send them to surrender..."

"There is no need to surrender," Chen Xiaolian said indifferently. "You harmed my friend, so I came to collect the debt. Sending people like you to the police would be useless. All you need to do is spend some money to smooth things over."

"Then... then what do you have in mind?" Boss Duan was utterly shocked and he looked at Chen Xiaolian.

Where did this kid come from? He has such terrifying skills! Boss Duan had never seen anyone who could fight as well as that! During his days as a dragon-tiger martial artist in the south, he had encountered a few gold-ranked fighters [1]. However, they were nowhere as incredible as this!

With just one hammer in hand, this little youngster had swept the floor with his over tens of men!

Smashing over ten dump trucks in one breath, he then walked over to talk with me without any signs of shortness of breath.

Son of a bitch!

Fertile Fatty and Little Cotton, you two bastards! Which Godlike beings did you two provoke? Now this terrifying little fiend has descended upon me!

Observing Chen Xiaolian's smile, Boss Duan suddenly collected himself and shouted. "I'll give you money! I'll give you money!"

Chen Xiaolian raised an eyebrow. "Oh? How much are you planning to pay?"

"I..." Boss Duan's heart ached. The price of the tens of dump truck was enough to make him suffer a loss of over a million yuans. He raised his eyes and caught sight of the smiling youngster. Seeing the expression on his face caused Boss Duan's heart to shudder and he quickly stopped considering – money may be important, but was it more important than one's own life?

"I... I have a safety box in my office," Boss Duan said with a mournful face. "As it happened, I just received payment recently – 1.2 million yuans in cash. I will give them all to you... that should be enough, right?"

Seeing as Chen Xiaolian had not given a reply, Boss Duan quickly continued. "I do not have any more to give. Boss, I am also trying to survive out here. I usually have to spend money to buy equipment and vehicles... I really do not have any more cash at present. It is currently night time, how am I going to get money from the bank for you?"

Boss Duan was able to feel somewhat assured about this... under such circumstances; the other party would certainly want the money in cash. They would never ask him to transfer the money so as to avoid any problems.

Using one hand, Chen Xiaolian pulled Boss Duan up from the ground and dragged him up to the second floor of the building and into his office.

There was indeed a safety box in his office. As Boss Duan knelt down

beside the safety box, he felt his heart aching once more.

He shakily proceeded and got the password wrong several times.

Chen Xiaolian gave a faint smile. Then, he suddenly pulled out a gun from his pocket and placed it on the table.

Once Boss Duan saw that, his eyeballs bulged outward.

That was no ordinary handgun – China was a place where guns were banned; in some places though, some guns would find its way into circulation. However, those available were at most, the Type 54 Black Star pistol.

This fellow had placed an MP5 submachine gun onto the table!

Without saying anything, Chen Xiaolian then pulled out a hand grenade and placed it before Boss Duan's eyes.

Seeing that, Boss Duan lost the courage to even think about anything else.

To be able to pull out a submachine gun and hand grenades... these people... even though he was a minor leader in illegal dealings, these kind of vicious people were the type that he could not afford to provoke!

At that instant, Boss Duan thoroughly convinced. Even the thought of getting revenge later on completely dissipated from his mind.

He had been struggling to make a living for half his life. After much difficulty, he finally managed to reach a net worth of millions. How would he dare to get involved with these ruthless people with guns and hand grenades?

Boss Duan quickly opened up the safety box.

Chen Xiaolian took a look inside. There were indeed stacks of cash lying inside. In addition, there were also two gold bracelets and two gold bars.

Chen Xiaolian smiled. "To think that you would actually have something like this."

"Those of us trying to survive in the underworld must have these things.

If the need to run away arises, it would be good to have it.”

“Interesting,” Chen Xiaolian inspected the office room and saw a large bag pack on the sofa. Walking over, he emptied the bag pack. Next, he moved the cash inside the safety box into the bag pack. When he was done, he slung the bag pack over his shoulders.

“Then, our accounts are cleared.”

“Cleared! Cleared!” Boss Duan smiled bitterly. “Absolutely cleared! Thank you for showing mercy!”

Chen Xiaolian saw a card case on the table and took one of the business cards there. Raising it in his hands, he said. “I will be taking this with me. If you plan to do something, I will come back and start another discussion with you. Your phone number is here, address... as to where you stay, I don’t think it will be too hard to find out.”

“I dare not! I dare not! I absolutely wouldn’t dare!” Boss Duan shouted out after thinking it through. “There is a surveillance camera at the gate of this place. I will go delete this night’s video.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled. “You are quite clever. There is no need to delete it. You can keep it and watch it if you want. You can also report to the police, but...”

“I dare not! I definitely wouldn’t dare! I will delete it instantly! I definitely will not let it leak out!”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “As expected from one capable of surviving this long, you are no fool.”

He straightened himself and patted Boss Duan’s face. Then, he kept the gun and hand grenade before leaving the room.

It was only after Chen Xiaolian had walked out of the room did Boss Duan let out a breath of relief. Then, he fell limp on the ground as cold sweat soaked his clothes wet.

Fertile Fatty! Little Cotton! You two bastards! This senior will definitely kill you two!

...

After Chen Xiaolian left the construction site, he walked into a little street and kept the bag pack into his Storage Watch. After doing so, he walked out of the street and flagged down a cab to take him back to the hospital.

Breaking one of each person's hand may not be enough of a punishment, but Chen Xiaolian knew that he had done enough.

He no longer had to do anything toward the two fellows who had caused the incident. Boss Duan who had just been beaten up and deprived of his wealth would definitely act on his behalf... even if he were to do nothing; Boss Duan would likely make those two fellows regret being born into this world.

...

After returning to the hospital, he saw Roddy sitting by the corridor, playing with his mobile phone. Raising his head, Roddy saw that Chen Xiaolian was coming over and he quickly nodded his head. "Is it done?"

Chen Xiaolian considered it and answered. "Done." He then looked through the window of the Intensive Care Unit ward. "How is Da Gang?"

"A doctor came to check up on him last night. He said that there are no problems and that his life is no longer in danger. We just need to keep any eye on him now," Roddy smiled. "He said that Da Gang can be sent to the general ward tomorrow. Maybe he is afraid that we cannot afford to pay the medical fees."

Chen Xiaolian raised his eyebrows. "Then, we'll have him discharged tomorrow. Him staying here will make things inconvenient for us."

"All right," Roddy nodded his head.

"That Yu Jiajia..."

"Last night, she came with two men. From the looks of it, the men must be lawyers. Since there were outsiders back then, I did not say anything to her," Roddy smiled. "After seeing that you weren't here, she appeared

disappointed. Did she not give you a call?"

Chen Xiaolian retrieved his mobile phone and checked it. "No battery."

"This girl seemed to be..."

"Don't go thinking nonsense. There is nothing between me and her,"
Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

...

When dawn arrived, Yu Jiajia came once more. It appeared as though she had not been sleeping properly. Her eyes that were usually glittering were now swollen and bloodshot.

There was also a man in black coloured suit following behind her. Who knew if the man was her bodyguard or her chauffeur.

Walking over, she saw Chen Xiaolian and her eyes brightened, and she quickly ran over. Gasping for breath, she asked. "Roddy, you are here?"

Chen Xiaolian could feel the mocking expression on Roddy's face, who was standing beside him. He gave an awkward smile. "How was your rest?"

"... it was all right," Yu Jiajia quickly replied. "I came here last night, but you were not here. I wanted to wait for you here. But the people from the company wanted to bring me over to meet up with the police..."

"It is fine, there is no need for you to explain," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "I did tell you to go back and rest."

Pausing, he then looked at the man in black coloured suit standing behind Yu Jiajia.

Yu Jiajia understood immediately and said. "This is the assistant sent by the company." She turned around and got the assistant to leave first. Although the assistant was reluctant, he silently left after taking a deep glance at Chen Xiaolian.

"Let's talk for a bit," Chen Xiaolian pointed at a fire escape passage beside the corridor.

Yu Jiajia followed Chen Xiaolian into the fire escape area. Next, Chen Xiaolian closed the door and looked up and down to make sure that no one else was around. It was only then did he turn around to face Yu Jiajia.

Yu Jiajia's face was slightly red and she whispered. "You... what did you do yesterday?"

"Don't ask about that," Chen Xiaolian thought about it and said. "At any rate, things have been resolved. Let us put an end to this matter. I can represent Da Gang. As for the police side of things, we will not pursue this matter anymore."

"Just... just let the matter slide?" Yu Jiajia asked with widened eyes.

"I fear things may not be that simple. For a criminal case such as this, even if we wish to end it, the police would not let go just like that. That is why we will need your help," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "For the police side..."

"I will do as you told me to yesterday," Yu Jiajia replied. "The people from the company will help me deal with it."

"Hmm," Chen Xiaolian slowly continued. "Then, for the following matters..."

"I can help you deal with the issues from the police," Yu Jiajia revealed traces of restlessness. "You... you didn't do anything outrageous, did you? I was unable to contact you at all yesterday."

"It's nothing, I just went out for a walk," Chen Xiaolian smiled.

Yu Jiajia knew that he was not telling the truth. However, she was unable to further question him about it. She looked at Chen Xiaolian with a complicated expression. "You..."

"I plan to help Da Gang get discharged today."

"What?" Yu Jiajia exclaimed abruptly. Quickly realizing that she had uttered that out in too loud a voice, she lowered her tone. "Da Gang is so badly hurt..."

"The doctor said that he is no longer in danger," Chen Xiaolian lowered his head to look at his feet. "I feel that it would be better to take him back

to his home to let him recuperate. Besides, he will be lying on the bed all the same. There is not much difference in lying on the hospital's bed and lying on his own bed."

Yu Jiajia considered it. Hesitating for a moment, she then whispered. "If you are worried about the medical bills, I can..."

"There is no need, this is not a financial issue," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "Actually... I can be considered fairly wealthy. This is not a financial issue."

"Then..." Yu Jiajia did not know what to say.

She could sense that this youngster before her had many secrets upon him, secrets that he did not want her to pry into.

"All right, this matter is finally over. Also... thank you! I am truly thankful to you!" Chen Xiaolian said sincerely. "You already have my phone number... if you need any help in the future, you can just give me a call. However..."

Chen Xiaolian suddenly smiled. "You are no ordinary person. I believe that there won't be any matters that would require the help of a commoner like me."

When the two of them emerged from the fire escape area, Yu Jiajia had a distracted expression on her face that was obvious for all to see. When the assistant in black coloured suit walked over, he could not restrain himself and he shot Chen Xiaolian with a rather unfriendly gaze once more.

"Miss Yu..." The assistant whispered. "You still need to go to the company in the afternoon to sign a contract, you see..."

"Wait for a moment," Yu Jiajia shook her head and she looked at Chen Xiaolian's leaving back as he walked over to converse with Roddy. She then bit down on her lips.

Finally, seemingly having made up her mind, Yu Jiajia walked forward.

Chen Xiaolian heard the incoming footsteps and he turned around to

look at Yu Jiajia.

“I... still have something to talk to you about.”

“En, what is it?” Chen Xiaolian asked calmly.

“Can I buy you a meal?” Yu Jiajia took a deep breath. “Regarding what happened last time, I have yet to thank you...”

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a bit. He saw that she was clearly nervous and both her hands were gripping tightly onto the sides of her clothes. She looked at him with a hopeful expression.

He smiled wryly inwardly... what is this future sugar baby of that elder thinking?

“A meal then. But, we will be taking care of the discharge formalities for Da Gang soon,” Chen Xiaolian thought it through. “Next time, then. Next time I come over to Hangzhou, I will give you a call and we’ll decide on the time for it.”

Yu Jiajia felt a sourness within her heart and a sudden gush of grievance came over her. She turned her head as her eyes turned red. Then, she forced out a smile and said. “All right, it’s decided then. We’ll decide the time later on.”

She did her best to smile and waved good-bye to Chen Xiaolian. Then, she nodded toward Roddy, turned around and left.

The girl walked away in a hurry. When she arrived at the corner of the corridor, she almost tripped. The assistant quickly moved forward to help her up.

Roddy got up. Standing behind Chen Xiaolian, he made a soft whistle.

“I say,” Roddy placed his hand onto Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder. “If this girl is not in love with you, this senior will cut off my own head to let you use as football.”

“Is it that obvious?” Chen Xiaolian frowned and smiled wryly.

“Even a blind fellow would have seen it!” Roddy pursed his lips to the side.

“You do not even know what is going on, do not blindly make things up,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

...

As they were taking care of the discharge procedures for Da Gang, they encountered some issues. The hospital had expressed disapproval toward their request for discharge. After all, Da Gang had only recently made it out of the danger period and was in need of hospital care.

Chen Xiaolian simply used the ultimate move and informed the hospital that the patient had neither health insurance nor much in terms of extra money. If he were to continue staying, he would likely be unable to afford the treatment fees.

Once they heard that, the hospital quickly changed their attitude. After having Chen Xiaolian sign the letter of responsibility for discharge, they allowed him to go.

Roddy had already rented a car beforehand and Chen Xiaolian moved Da Gang out of the hospital with a wheelchair and into the car. Then, they left the hospital.

Da Gang had already regained consciousness by then. However, his consciousness was still sluggish and blurry; and he was in a half-asleep state.

However, seeing that Chen Xiaolian was one of those beside him, he became at ease and quickly fell asleep once more.

After bringing Da Gang out from the hospital, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy drove into a five-star hotel and checked in.

When they were inside the room, Chen Xiaolian placed Da Gang on the table and fed him a [Beginner] class Healing Beast Blood.

The [Beginner] class Healing Beast Blood went into effect immediately and Da Gang's breathing became steady and he quickly returned to sleep.

“Once he wakes up, won't he find it strange to see that all the injuries on his body had been healed?” Roddy smiled.

“His injuries are too severe. [Beginner] class Healing Beast Blood will not be able to fully heal him instantly. He will still need to rest for some time before he can fully recover,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

Chen Xiaolian went to charge his mobile phone. Soon, he saw the several missed call prompts on his phone.

They were all from yesterday, by Yu Jiajia.

At that moment, his mobile phone rang!

Checking the incoming caller's number, Chen Xiaolian frowned.

He recalled this number. It belonged to Qiao Qiao's father, Qiao Yifeng.

After pondering it through, he called back.

His call was quickly answered.

“Chen Xiaolian!”

“I am here,” Chen Xiaolian replied with a tone that was neither humble nor haughty.

“How did Yu Jiajia get sucked into this matter?” Qiao Yifeng's voice sounded rather perplexed.

“Actually, this has nothing to do with her,” Chen Xiaolian answered coolly.

“The one wounded is your friend?”

“Yes.”

Seemingly snorting, Qiao Yifeng replied. “The number of friends you have is quite something. You have quite a convoluted way of making friends. Do you just make friends with everyone? Even a school janitor is your friend.”

“Your way of making friends is even more convoluted than mine,” Chen Xiaolian's tone was somewhat hard – he was clear that Qiao Qiao's disappearance over the last few days had something to do with Qiao Yifeng. Thus, he felt rather furious.

“For this matter, I will get someone to hold down the police side of

things,” As expected from a member of an Awakened Guild, Qiao Yifeng was quick to identify the crux of the matter. “If you are going to deal with it, don’t create a scene!”

“... all right,” Naturally, Chen Xiaolian did not refuse. With a big boss like Qiao Yifeng stepping in, the police would likely not continue their pursuit in this matter.

“In the future... you had best keep your distance from Yu Jiajia!” Qiao Yifeng said to Chen Xiaolian with a voice that was neither soft nor hard.

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and said. “Qiao Qiao...”

“She will no longer have anything to do with you in the future.”

The phone call was cut off.

Roddy who was standing beside looked at Chen Xiaolian. “What happened? Who did you call?”

“... .. it’s nothing,” Chen Xiaolian tried his best to smile.

“Nothing? As expected from a writer, making up a story without first making a draft,” Roddy smiled. “It’s about you and Qiao Qiao, right? Your current expression is just like mine when I was first jilted.”

“The first time you were jilted? How is it that I have never known about it?” Chen Xiaolian looked at Roddy and pursed his lips to the side. “This senior has known you since junior high.”

“Tch! This senior’s first love was in my 5th grade of primary school!”

“You beast!” Chen Xiaolian bluntly threw out the middle finger toward Roddy.

...

“So, Qiao Qiao’s father...”

Half an hour later, Roddy’s eyes were wide open as he looked at Chen Xiaolian, his expression one of utter shock.

In the end, Chen Xiaolian had informed Roddy about the whole thing... after all, Qiao Qiao was not just his girlfriend, she was also a member of

their guild and Roddy's good friend.

"Yes."

"By the Heavens!" Roddy's eyes were wide open. "Her father was once an Awakened? Such a big boss is actually an agent for an Awakened Guild? I have known her for so long, but I never knew that her father was so incredible!"

"We now face a problem. Qiao Qiao is probably being held by her father. I cannot even get in contact with her," Chen Xiaolian frowned.

"I think that there will be a favourable turning point," Roddy suddenly said. "Don't forget... instance dungeons!"

"En!" Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

In the system, Qiao Qiao was still a member of his guild!

When the system issued out instance dungeons, Qiao Qiao who was a member of his guild would still be allocated the instance dungeons together with the guild.

That was one area where Qiao Yifeng had no control over – if he could control the system, then he would become an existence that surpassed the Development Team.

"Qiao Qiao did not leave our guild," Roddy slowly said. "That proves that Qiao Yifeng is the one holding her while she has no way of getting away. However, the act of leaving our guild is something within her personal control. Thus, she did not leave the guild. This action of hers had proven where she stands in all this. She is still on our side."

"I have never doubted that," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "What I am worried about... the time for instance dungeon allocation is drawing near, when the time arrives..."

"Old Qiao will definitely let her go. There is no way that he would let his own daughter die, right? After being selected by an instance dungeon, not participating would be the equivalent of getting exterminated."

"That is what I am worried about!" Chen Xiaolian's face revealed fear.

“Qiao Yifeng believes that after an Awakened dies, they will be refreshed back to become an ordinary person!

“What if that is his intention with Qiao Qiao?

“In the event that he wants to use this method to turn his daughter back into an ordinary person...”

Roddy’s face instantly sank. “That would be a huge problem! We are not Awakened ones! We are Irregularities! If she dies, she will not be refreshed!”

Chen Xiaolian’s face had turned extremely distorted.

He stood up and walked around the room twice.

“Roddy, we now have two options,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly. “First, find a way to forcibly rescue Qiao Qiao from her father’s hold! Second... if it comes down to it, we will have to tell Qiao Yifeng the truth!”

“But, the truth...” Roddy’s face too, became very distorted.

“I understand,” Chen Xiaolian’s face revealed his anxiety. “Our identities are a secret! Once the other Awakened ones find out about it, we may become a common enemy! However... in the end, for Qiao Qiao’s sake, we no longer have any other options.”

—

1 Gold-ranked fighter. The strongest fighter in a gang, group or faction.

Chapter 171: Turn of Events

Their current situation could be likened to being stuck riding on the back of a tiger [1].

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy discussed the matter for a moment. However, they were unable to come up with any solutions.

Sometime late at night, Da Gang was finally healed to the point where he could regain his consciousness. Seeing Chen Xiaolian beside him, his face became blank for a moment. After collecting himself, he said in a whisper. "Thank you."

Chen Xiaolian replied with a faint smile. "We are friends; there is no need for thanks between friends."

"Even between friends, thanks must be said. In this world, no one should owe others anything," Da Gang's eyes turned dim. "That is what my mother taught me when she was still alive."

Feeling the melancholy within their current topic, Chen Xiaolian quickly laughed. "How do you feel? Do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?"

Da Gang got down from the bed and slowly walked two steps before frowning. "It seems I am a lot better now. The only thing of note is this feeling of weakness and a slight pain. But..."

"It seems your constitution is quite good. Your rate of recovery is quite good," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "Don't worry, those are all superficial injuries. At your age, all you need to do is to rest properly and you will recover quickly."

Da Gang looked at Chen Xiaolian. "I know that going to the hospital requires money, I..."

"You don't have to worry about the medical expenses."

"Debts must be repaid," Da Gang shook his head. "I do not have any money now. In the future..."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Da Gang and suddenly had an idea. "There is a way."

He slowly said. "Last time, I invited you to come with me to Jinling. Now..."

Da Gang had a complicated look on his face.

Chen Xiaolian continued in a low tone. "This time's incident is quite big. Even though I did help solve the matter, there is no guarantee as to whether or not there will be any future complications. Those who beat you up might return to exact vengeance. And the police..."

Da Gang frowned.

Chen Xiaolian quickly said. "Why don't you follow me to Jinling for some time? As it so happened, I recently rented a fitness centre. If you feel indebted toward me, you can help me out there. You can help out with sweeping the floor and keeping watch..."

Suddenly, Da Gang smiled.

As he smiled, a faint spark of life shone from within his originally dim eyes. He silently looked at Chen Xiaolian. "I am not going."

"Eh?"

"I know that you want to help take care of me," Da Gang shook his head. "Those things you said, sweeping the floor and keeping watch, those were simply meant to make me feel better. I will accept your good intentions. But... I will never leave my home here."

He slowly stood up. "The hospital fees that I owe you, I will slowly pay you back. The school will give me a salary. Although it is very little, I will work hard to save."

Seeing the firmness shown by Da Gang, Chen Xiaolian could only sigh.

Everyone had his or her own way of life. Although his intentions were good, he could not force it upon others.

"Thank you," Da Gang's expression revealed traces of guilt and he said in a whisper. "Ever since I was young, up until now, with the exception of

my mother, you are the only one to treat me this well. You are a good person.”

Chen Xiaolian laughed. “All right, all right. It’s bad enough that I get the good person card from a girl. You are a male. Why are you giving me a good person card?”

On the second day, Da Gang had greatly recovered. However, he insisted on returning home.

Before leaving, Chen Xiaolian told him. “About the hospital fees, there is no need for you to worry about it. I had already found those people who beat you up and upheld justice for you. They also compensated you with some money. This money...”

“I do not want it,” Da Gang shook his head and looked at Chen Xiaolian with an expression of relentlessness. “That is something you got from them. I know, if not for you, those people would not have given me even a penny worth of compensation.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly. “This money is originally meant to be a form of compensation for you...”

“You keep it,” Da Gang smiled and said in a deep voice. “You could come all the way from Jinling to help me; I will remember this act of friendship.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “At the very least, don’t bring up the matter about the hospital fees anymore, all right?”

Da Gang considered it and nodded his head. “All right!”

In the morning, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy brought Da Gang back to his home. When they reached the hut behind the school, Roddy saw the plastic-wrapped windows; the dark, damp room and he could not help but frown. “Brother Da Gang, I think you should come with us to Jinling. This place... it is really...”

Da Gang smiled. “Even if it is worse, it is still home.”

He picked up the dirty clothes on the surface of the bed and said.

“Please sit first. I will go cook up some hot water for you.”

Chen Xiaolian laughed. “What do you mean drink water? Come on, it’s getting late, we’ll go out for a meal!”

Da Gang hesitated, but Chen Xiaolian had already dragged him out. “Since we are friends, eating a meal together is a must. We will be heading back today after all. Just consider it giving us the chance to play the role of friends... besides, we got a huge sum of money from those bastards. Eating a good meal is nothing.”

Da Gang looked on helplessly and placed down the kettle in his hands. “Very well, give me a minute. I will go lock the door.”

He turned back, headed into the room and changed into a set of clean clothing. The clothing was his work clothes. It was very worn and its sleeves and collars have been frayed. However, it appeared to have been washed clean.

Da Gang wore the clothes and carefully locked the door before heading out together with Chen Xiaolian and Roddy.

Walking through a nearby street, Chen Xiaolian found the biggest and most luxurious looking restaurant and pointed at it. He smiled and said. “We’ll eat here! Yesterday, the amount of compensation given by Boss Duan is quite considerable. We’ll eat a good meal here!”

Da Gang, who was still hesitant, was pulled by Chen Xiaolian into the restaurant.

In the afternoon, the restaurant’s business was quite good. The private rooms were full and the three of them chose a place to sit by the windows.

Roddy did not hesitate to order a huge amount of food. Originally, he had wanted to order some beer as well. However, after considering the fact that Da Gang had just recovered from such a serious injury, he decided against it.

Da Gang appeared embarrassed as he faced the abundant amount of dishes on the table. Chen Xiaolian directly sent out his chopsticks and

gathered a variety of vegetables for Da Gang's bowl. Then, he laughed. "Bro, think about it this way. These dishes were all obtained in exchange for your blood. Not eating it would be a waste! Come! If you do not eat properly, the two of us would not be able to eat properly as well."

Hearing that, Da Gang smiled. "All right! I will eat! I will do my best to eat it!"

Chen Xiaolian winked at Roddy. Roddy understood immediately and got up saying he needed to go to the toilet. Then, he secretly ran out of the restaurant.

After a moment, Roddy returned slowly and secretly made an 'OK' sign toward Chen Xiaolian.

Roddy had quietly gone out to do something. He took the opportunity to return to Da Gang's house and left a bag of money on his bed.

The three of them were about the same age. After eating for a while, the atmosphere warmed up and they began to discuss about some interesting topics.

At that moment, a man who did not look very old sat down on the table beside them. After sitting down, the man ordered two side dishes and a bowl of rice.

Chen Xiaolian noticed that the man's clothes were very clean. The man wore a pair of thick glasses and appeared familiar. After looking at him carefully, Chen Xiaolian quickly recognized the man.

Coincidentally, the man turned his head around and the two of them made eye contact. Chen Xiaolian blurted out. "You are... Doctor Mu?"

The man was taken aback and he nodded subconsciously. Then, he recognized Chen Xiaolian. "Oh, it is you?"

Doctor Mu was the doctor in charge of Da Gang back in the hospital.

When Chen Xiaolian had arrived at the hospital, he had inquired about Da Gang's injuries from Doctor Mu. Later on however, they no longer had much contact.

When Da Gang was being discharged yesterday, Doctor Mu was not in the hospital. Thus, they did not have the chance to meet up. Unexpectedly, they would end up meeting each other here.

After looking at Chen Xiaolian's table, Doctor Mu's face suddenly revealed surprise. He stood up and walked over. He then looked at Da Gang. "Eh? You... you, why are you out of the hospital?"

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy exchanged glances and they both felt awkward. Doctor Mu's expression turned ugly to behold and he said. "Don't mess around! You are suffering from such a heavy injury, why are you out here having a meal instead of staying in the hospital? Also... how can you eat these things? You..."

Chen Xiaolian quickly grabbed Doctor Mu's hand and pulled him down onto a chair. Then, he patted Doctor Mu's shoulder and smiled. "Doctor Mu, Da Gang had already been discharged from the hospital."

"Discharged from the hospital?" The doctor nearly jumped out and he furiously spoke out. "How could you do that? His injuries are extremely severe; he needs to receive treatment from the hospital. How could... Nonsense! What a farce! Who is the one who processed your discharge procedures?"

Chen Xiaolian smiled awkwardly. "Truthfully, it is nothing. We saw that Da Gang is nearly all healed up. And the daily cost for the intensive care ward is too big..."

"Nonsense!" Doctor Mu interrupted Chen Xiaolian and said in a solemn manner. "Do you know how dangerous this is? His body is suffering from many external and internal injuries. There are even internal bleeding! You are not getting hospital treatment? What will you do if something happens? How could your relatives be so muddleheaded?"

He paused for a moment before shaking his head. "This won't do! I was on rest shift yesterday. That was why I was not on-duty yesterday. But now that we have met, I cannot ignore this! He is my patient and I am responsible for him! You must follow me back to the hospital!"

He stared at Da Gang. "Young man! Are you worried about the medical

expenses? Let me inform you, your injuries are no joking matter. At such a young age, you should take good care of your life! Just think about it, you still have a long life ahead of you, you cannot act in such a foolish manner!”

Chen Xiaolian tugged Doctor Mu’s wrist. “Doctor, look at him carefully. Doesn’t he look much better?”

This Doctor Mu appeared to be a rather by-the-book person. After having vented out his anger, he carefully looked at Da Gang and let out an ‘eh” sound. He then moved over and grabbed Da Gang’s wrist. Subsequently, he reached out with his hand to nudge Da Gang’s eyelids upward and said in a low tone. “Don’t move!”

He pulled out a stethoscope from the bag he carried with him and used it to listen to Da Gang’s chest. After putting down the stethoscope, Doctor Mu’s expression became distant. “This, this... how is this possible...”

Just yesterday, this patient was critically ill with tubes inserted into him. Today, he could already run around, dine, and drink in a restaurant?

“Impossible... could it be, did I make the wrong diagnosis back then? However... he was clearly suffering from fractures and internal bleeding...” Doctor Mu’s face revealed traces of guilt – if he had been the one to make the wrong diagnosis, then that meant this young man was not suffering from such heavy injuries. It was his misdiagnosis that caused this young man to suffer so much inside the Intensive Care Unit ward...

Thinking about that, Doctor Mu quickly stood up. “This won’t do! I need to go back to the hospital! I will go check up your medical records! And the pictures taken back then, I need to go examine them!”

He hesitated for a moment and looked at Da Gang. “You... you should still come back with me to the hospital. Don’t worry about the hospital fees. If there is any problem there, I can help you think of something...”

Chen Xiaolian felt moved by this.

This Doctor Mu was a very good person, an ethical and responsible

person.

Chen Xiaolian hesitated before saying in a whisper. “Doctor Mu, there is really no need. Just look at him. Isn’t he all right now?”

Doctor Mu sighed. He knew that they would certainly refuse. As for him, he could not possibly force them to go to the hospital. Additionally, his mind was currently wavering – did he really misdiagnosed him?

He mulled over the issue and then pulled out his name card from his pocket. “This is my number... if he feels any discomfort, call me immediately! Then, quickly send him to the hospital! I... I’ll be leaving first.”

Doctor Mu straightened himself and walked out of the restaurant absent-mindedly. It was likely that he was heading back to the hospital to check up on Da Gang’s medical records.

After such a scene, their dining atmosphere had come to a halt.

Da Gang watched as the doctor left and whispered. “He... is a good person.”

Roddy sighed. “It is rare to see such a good doctor nowadays.”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “Truth be told, most doctors are good people. It is just that the healthcare system is very messed up. Let’s not talk about this.”

However, the three of them were unable to continue eating after that. Besides, they have had their fill. Thus, they simply paid up and left.

“Then, this is goodbye,” Chen Xiaolian smiled.

Da Gang shook his head. “You two are going back using the train, aren’t you? Since I have nothing to do, I will accompany you there.”

After considering it, Chen Xiaolian did not refuse.

At any rate, Da Gang’s body had fully recovered. Additionally... Roddy had left a bag full of money in his house. If Da Gang returned and saw it, he would probably run to the train station to find Chen Xiaolian. Since that was the case, he might as well have Da Gang accompany them to the

train station. Then, when Da Gang returned home to find the bag of money, he won't have enough time to return it to him.

Chen Xiaolian readily agreed. The three of them then stood by the street to flag down a cab.

At that moment, a Multi-purpose Vehicle slowly stopped by the street.

The door of the MPV opened to reveal Yu Jiajia sitting inside.

"It's you guys?"

Yu Jiajia looked at Da Gang and was somewhat surprised. "You... how are you..."

"He has already been discharged. There is no problem with his body," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "Back then, the hospital made a misdiagnosis. There were actually no major issues."

Unfortunately, he would have to turn Doctor Mu into a scapegoat.

Yu Jiajia looked on with scepticism before shifting her gaze onto Chen Xiaolian's body. "You guys..."

"We are about to go to the train station."

"You are leaving already?" Yu Jiajia's eyes turned gloomy, but quickly recovered.

"En, we have stayed here for two days. Since Da Gang is now all right, we will have to return. We still have some matters to do back home," Chen Xiaolian smiled softly.

Yu Jiajia bit her lips. "Since I am here, I'll help by sending you guys over to the train station."

Chen Xiaolian was about to reject, only to have Yu Jiajia stare at him. She said slowly. "Since we are friends, do you have to reject this little offer of mine? Or are you looking down on me?"

After she said that, Chen Xiaolian found himself unable to respond. He considered it. It was just a trip to the train station and should not take too long.

“Get in.”

Yu Jiajia moved to the back row.

Roddy smiled and dragged Da Gang with him into the MPV. He purposely placed himself and Da Gang at the second row. When Chen Xiaolian got into the car, he could only move to the back and sit together with Yu Jiajia in the back row.

Within the narrow confines of the car, Chen Xiaolian who was seated beside Yu Jiajia could smell the faint fragrant aroma wafting out from Yu Jiajia's body. Feeling awkward, he quietly moved a little to the side.

However, that subtle movement of his did not escape the girl's notice. Another burst of grievance welled up from within Yu Jiajia and she turned her head to look out the window. Her heart felt sour and bitter.

The MPV drove smoothly through the street and headed toward the train station.

The atmosphere inside the car was very quiet and no one said anything. Da Gang felt cramped while Roddy pretended to fiddle with his mobile phone. However, Roddy was surreptitiously checking out the back row through the reflection on his mobile phone.

Chen Xiaolian and Yu Jiajia were lost in their thoughts each. Both pretended to be looking out the window, but they were both in fact preoccupied with their own thoughts.

After a while, Yu Jiajia pursed her lips and said in a whisper. “Roddy, are you returning to Jinling?”

“Er...”

Roddy who was not paying attention nearly answered the question. Then, he suddenly recalled that she was asking Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian too was surprised. Then, he answered with a stammer. “En, yes.”

“Then, when will you be coming over to Hangzhou again?”

“There will be chances for that, there will be,” Chen Xiaolian smiled

wryly.

“When I have the time, I will go to Jinling to find you guys. I have never been to Jinling yet. I hear that there are many fun and scenic places there.”

Chen Xiaolian said ambiguously. “Actually, it is around the same.”

Yu Jiajia’s heart felt increasingly sour. Her eyes had turned red and tears nearly trickled down from her eyes; she bit down hard on her lips.

Roddy who was seated in front heard their exchange clearly. He could not help but let out a sigh inwardly. Yet, it also felt somewhat funny.

Da Gang was about to say something to lighten the atmosphere when...

Suddenly, a bang could be heard!

The car shook and the chauffeur quickly hit the brakes.

They looked out the windows and saw that the car had stopped by the street. In front of them, a sedan car had come to a halt as well. It appeared that the MPV had knocked into the sedan car’s rear end.

Two people walked out of the sedan car, their faces filled with anger and curses flew out from their mouths.

The chauffeur rolled down the window to argue with them.

“Something about this doesn’t seem right.”

Da Gang who had remained silent all this while suddenly uttered.

“Hmm?” Roddy glanced at Da Gang.

“The car in front had suddenly stopped, causing us to slam into them,” Da Gang pointed to the front.

The gears in Chen Xiaolian’s mind moved and he observed the scene before him. Then, he turned around to look behind.

He quickly discovered that another car had come to a stop some distance behind their MPV. Two people had alighted from the car and they quietly, slowly moved toward them.

“Something is not right!” Chen Xiaolian’s face fell and he abruptly recalled the assassination attempt on Qiao Yifeng from a few nights ago.

At that moment, the chauffeur in front suddenly gasped in shock as a hand stretched inside and pulled the chauffeur out from the driver’s seat!

The strength behind the action was so strong that it ripped out the seat belts!

“Roddy!” Chen Xiaolian howled and Roddy charged out of the MPV.

Chen Xiaolian followed suit. Just as he was moving out from the MPV, he heard a “hey” shout coming from Roddy!

Roddy was already fighting against one of the men. As for the chauffeur, he was lying motionless on the ground.

“Stay in the car!” Chen Xiaolian shut the door to the MPV behind him.

Another man had stepped forward to besiege Roddy. Chen Xiaolian moved forward and sent a fist toward the back of that man’s head.

That man dodged in a flash and a dagger flashed out unmistakably in his hand. He bent and the dagger stabbed toward Chen Xiaolian’s chest!

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and he retreated one step after another. He retreated all the way until his back made contact with the surface of the MPV. Seeing the incoming dagger, Chen Xiaolian dodged to the side and the dagger pierced into the car!

The dagger was incredibly sharp to the point where even the handle made its way in!

“Ah!”

By the time Yu Jiajia, who was seated inside the MPV screamed out, the dagger had already been pulled out of the car!

Chen Xiaolian quickly made his deduction!

That was no ordinary dagger! It was most likely an equipment acquired through the system!

Roddy was tussling with the other man – even though Roddy did not

have any martial skills, he was still someone with an enhanced body. His body had [B] class attributes.

He would not be taken down so easily.

By then, the other two men from the back had dropped all attempts to be subtle. They charged forward with guns in their hands!

Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and pulled out a gun with his left hand while his right hand pulled out 'Fearless War Axe' from the system!

Lashing out with Head Cleaver, his move shocked the man he was fighting against. The man retreated and used the dagger in his hand to block the attack.

A breaking sound rang out and the dagger was broken into two! Chen Xiaolian raised his other hand and fired away with his gun. The bullets fired struck the man on his chest!

The man uttered a muffled grunt and cast a grudging expression at Chen Xiaolian before slumping weakly onto the ground.

Seeing another man running over while opening fire with a gun, Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes, he then raised his axe to defend himself. The double-bladed axe had a broad surface area and the bullets fired bounced off its surface.

The other party saw the axe in Chen Xiaolian's hand and he shouted fiercely. Then, he pulled out a long sword and slashed it down before Chen Xiaolian!

Chen Xiaolian raised his axe to block the attack and the sound of metal hitting metal echoed out! Both their bodies shook and they looked at one another.

Chen Xiaolian's strength was at [B+] class, but his opponent was clearly in no way weaker than him!

After executing two of three attack moves of Demon King of Confusion's Three Axes in succession, he found that the opponent was able to block them all without suffering from any damage. Chen Xiaolian

quickly changed his pace and utilized the Charging Stinger skill.

His opponent was clearly in no hurry to finish things off. However, once Chen Xiaolian utilized the Charging Stinger skill, his Agility soared. A “chi” sound was heard as the tip of his axe tore through his opponent’s clothes. His opponent dodged away and his clothes were torn to pieces, revealing the protective suit within.

Chen Xiaolian took a glance at the suit and his heart sank!

Judging by the colour of the protective suit... if Chen Xiaolian was not mistaken, it was an [A] class protective suit!

At that moment, another gun-toting fellow had arrived. He ignored Chen Xiaolian and aimed his gun at Roddy...

By then, Roddy had already pushed his opponent down onto the ground. He had one hand on his opponent’s neck while the other hand held onto his opponent’s hand. The two of them were locked in a stalemate.

Chen Xiaolian’s face turned grim. He quickly stepped aside to toss out Fearless War Axe!

A bang rang out and the gun-toting fellow’s neck tilted to the side as Fearless War Axe cleaved its way into his shoulder. Half his body was instantly stained with blood! The fellow screamed out miserably and fell to his knees on the spot. The gun in his hands too, fell to the ground.

Chen Xiaolian tried to rush over only to have the long sword-wielding man slash at him. Seeing that Chen Xiaolian was now unarmed, he took advantage of this moment to attack. Chen Xiaolian took two steps backward and summoned out Garfield!

A majestic leopard-like animal suddenly appeared in broad daylight. Thankfully, the street they were in was secluded with little to no pedestrians or incoming cars – apparently, the other party had specially selected this place for their actions.

Unleashing a roar, Garfield pounced forward.

The long sword-wielding man sneered. “You’re seeking death! You’re

using [A] class power!”

He quickly retreated and the long sword in his hand flew out toward Roddy’s back!

Chen Xiaolian was shocked and he quickly leapt forward to pull Roddy away. The sword sliced through Roddy’s cheeks and into the ground, creating sparks of flames in the process!

The man smiled contemptuously. Then, with a flick of his wrist, he caused the sword to fly back into his hands.

Turning around, he opened the door to the MPV and delivered a punch onto Da Gang who had tried to rush him. With one hand, he swept up his two injured companions and tossed them into the MPV.

Chen Xiaolian rushed forward. However, as the man was turning around, a faint air flow appeared before him...

By then, Garfield had already descended before the man. However, he only sneered. His long sword shot out to deflect Garfield’s charging blow. Then, with a turn of his body, the blade of the sword drew out an arc of light.

A semi-circular arc of light flew out at incredible speed!

Chen Xiaolian hastily crouched down. Unfortunately for one of Garfield’s doppelgangers, he was unable to dodge in time and was sliced through by the attack. Then, he turned into a beam of light before disappearing.

The other two of Garfield’s doppelgangers were about to pounce forward when the two airflows suddenly appeared, locking the two of them in place!

Although it had lasted for only a few seconds, in that time, the man had steadily marched forward and engaged Chen Xiaolian again. Their fists connected and Chen Xiaolian staggered backward. The man took advantage of that instant to jump into the car.

At the same time, Roddy’s opponent got up and leapt upward. His body

slammed through the window and he got into the MPV.

The MPV was started up and it charged forward!

Roddy who was standing before the MPV saw it charging at him. He quickly jumped to the side. Then, he watched as the MPV drove away.

“Damn it! Chase!” Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth and he ran toward the car left behind by those men.

Roddy who was right behind him got into the car as well. Chen Xiaolian started up the car and quickly gave chase.

“Do you want me to summon the Mech?” Roddy’s eyes shone.

“Not just yet!” Chen Xiaolian’s face was grim. “Save up the summoning time. We may need it later on!”

Garfield had already been summoned back into the system. Their car sped forward in hot pursuit of the MPV.

...

“Thirteenth Bro and Ninth Bro won’t make it.”

Inside the MPV, the man who was fighting Roddy raised his head in anger. “Bastard!”

The man driving the MPV was none other than the one who was fighting against Chen Xiaolian. His long sword had already been kept. When he heard the news, his eyes twitched and he coldly said. “Hmph! For now, send the objective to the target location! They are still chasing us... lure them over there and finish them off right there! We’ve taken a huge loss this time! To think that this little girl would have such powerful bodyguards! It seems Qiao Yifeng really dotes on her!”

Yu Jiajia was completely terrified and her body trembled as she lay on the back seat.

“Ninth Bro! Ninth Bro! Thirteenth Bro!”

The fellow at the back row held onto his two companions tightly. He had already fed them with Healing Beast Bloods. Unfortunately, it

appeared that the injuries they received were too much. That was especially true for the one whose shoulder was cleaved by Chen Xiaolian. The attack had split open part of his body.

Seeing that his two companions were no longer breathing, the man let out a furious roar. He picked up Chen Xiaolian's Fearless War Axe, raised it up and sent it chopping down toward the unconscious Da Gang's body.

“Don't!”

Yu Jiajia let out a shrill scream and jumped up. She clung onto the man's arm, only to have him throw a backhand at her. She was tossed back onto the back row seat.

“Don't do anything first,” The driver who was clearly their leader said coolly. “Seventh Bro, when we reach the target location, we can slowly torture him.”

Then, he looked at them from the rear view mirror. “Fearless War Axe? [A] class equipment! Those two brats are quite something!”

Yu Jiajia who was lying on the back seat let out a moan. She felt her head spinning slightly. Then, she saw the corpses of the two assassins slowly transforming into a clump of light before slowly disappearing...

Yu Jiajia became dumbstruck.

However, she then saw an even stranger phenomenon.

Two circular metal spheres appeared on the floor of the MPV. However, the one called Seventh Bro did not appear to notice them... the metal spheres rolled toward his feet. But he did not show any reaction toward them at all. Then, due to the movement of the MPV, the metal spheres rolled away and reached Da Gang's feet.

Da Gang had fainted. However, his nose was bleeding. His blood dripped down one after another, and one of them made contact with the surface of one of the metal spheres...

—

Doctor Mu. Raw: ‘穆’, pinyin: ‘mù’. ‘Mù’ (穆) means solemn.

1 'Stuck riding on the back of a tiger' describes encountering a problem halfway through a project or action. Under that circumstance, you will end up facing the problem regardless of whether you choose to continue or stop. Since that is the case, you can only grit your teeth and continue forward.

Chapter 172: Greatness For The Sake Of The Heavens

Their car kept chasing after the MPV, but the speed of the MPV gradually increased while the car carrying Chen Xiaolian and Roddy could only follow from behind.

As they were in pursuit, they arrived at a fork in the street. The MPV made an abrupt turn, charging into a factory. Then, after another turn, they lost sight of the MPV.

Chen Xiaolian's heart gave a pound and he quickly braked, causing the car to skid to a halt in the middle of the street. At the same time, a beam of fire descended, slamming into the factory's plant. A loud explosion rang out and the flames from the explosion filled the air, obscuring their vision of the street.

Chen Xiaolian quickly moved the car backward. Explosions continued to occur within the factory's plant and half the street became engulfed within a sea of flames.

"Damn it!" Roddy swore.

"No need to panic," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "There is the radar, they won't get away."

Within the system radar, two green dots could be seen moving away rapidly.

...

Within a yet to be developed factory site...

The MPV quickly drove into the factory site. Inside the site, the doors to a huge warehouse were opened and the MPV drove in. Two people inside the warehouse quickly moved to close the doors.

The area had a number of armed men who held onto firearms of varying length. On the second floor of the warehouse, some gun-toting men were checking the perimeter through the ventilation holes.

After the MPV came to a halt, the front door was kicked open and the man in the driver's seat jumped out. The passenger door too was opened and the one known as Seventh Bro came out, his eyes red. He turned around, pulled both Yu Jiajia and Da Gang out from the MPV and threw them onto the ground.

Yu Jiajia's body was trembling non-stop and an expression of fear filled her face.

There were five to six men inside the warehouse. Those men were clearly mercenaries. They wore combat vests and were armed with guns. Among them were two who were clearly not Asians; those two had noticeable moustache and beard.

"Goods have been delivered!" Seventh Bro spat out in a loud and fierce voice.

At that moment, a slender figure stood up and jumped down from the second floor. Then, that person walked over.

The person was a female whose slender body bordered on being thin. She carried a composite bow in her hand and a quiver of arrows hung from her thigh. The quiver shook as she walked forward.

The woman walked until she reached the two men. After glancing at Seventh Bro, she turned her attention to the leader.

"The matter is complete, now pay up," This was the man driving the MPV. He held onto Chen Xiaolian's Fearless War Axe as he warily gazed at the bow-wielding woman before him.

"You did such a sloppy job," The woman spoke in a rather hoarse voice. "You actually had someone tailing you."

"I don't care. I have already brought the one you wanted to you. As for what happen next, that is up to you."

"Ma Da, is this how you brothers handle a job?" The woman sneered. "It doesn't seem to conform to the rules."

The one known as Seventh Bro furiously retorted. "How is this not

conforming to the rules? When you commissioned us, you did not say that there would be so many Awakened ones defending the girl! Bloody Hell! Our opponents had [A] class strength! For the sake of this small business, we lost two brothers!”

“In this line of business, death is only natural,” The woman replied indifferently.

Seventh Bro became incensed and he clenched his fists. Ma Da, however, held onto his companion. He looked at the woman and said coolly. “So? Are you not planning to pay?”

“Of course not. We are people who observe the rules,” The woman smiled lightly. “6,000 points. I will give them to you now.”

A few seconds later, they finished the transaction of points through the system. However, Ma Da frowned. “Why 7,000 points?”

“It’s simple. You lost two men. Consider that extra amount as consolation money,” The woman smirked. Although the woman had mediocre looks, the smile made her look savage. “Don’t be so sad, Mr. Ma Da. It is not as though you did not gain any harvest from this. That axe in your hand is something you seized, right? That is a good item.”

“Hmph!” Ma Da snorted and ignored the woman.

Seeing that Ma Da and his companion were about to leave, the woman suddenly said. “Please wait first.”

“What is it?”

“There are rules to everything,” The woman shook her head. “Your tail is coming closer. You should at least help me get rid of it. Leaving just like this is rather inappropriate, don’t you think?”

Ma Da hesitated and looked around. His eyes examined the surrounding men and he said. “You have so many people here. Why would you need any help from us brothers?”

“After taking the money, one should do their best at their job. I have already given you the reward, you should help me finish the job,” The

woman continued. "Finish off the tail before you leave."

Ma Da looked at Seventh Bro. Seventh Bro's eyes were red and he said. "They killed Ninth Bro and Thirteenth Bro! Boss, this debt must be repaid!"

"All right!" Ma Da gritted his teeth and looked at the woman.

...

"All the factories here look the same," Roddy looked around anxiously. "Since there are no people around, I can just summon the Mech to flatten this place! The system will just refresh this place later on."

"Are you going to kill off Da Gang and Yu Jiajia as well?" Chen Xiaolian frowned. "Be patient! We are getting close! The radar shows that the distance between us is getting smaller... there is less than 1 km. They have quite some men, there are three green dots now..."

The two of them got out of the car. They walked forward and searched around the factory area. Cautiously, they moved closer to their targets.

...

"Our target are two men, they are not very old," Ma Da quickly said. "One of them has fairly good strength. He had only fought with his hands and did not reveal any skills or abilities. The other one is more difficult to handle. In our fight earlier, he summoned out Four-eyed War Cats... surprisingly, he has three of them. I did manage to kill one of them though. Additionally, this Fearless War Axe also belonged to him. To be in possession of an [A] class weapon, he is probably not your average fellow."

"Boss, they are getting closer," The Seventh Bro said slowly. "We can see them in the radar."

"They have already entered their combat state?" The woman smiled. She turned to her underlings and said. "Get our two guests to the side first. Make sure you be careful with the little girl, she is a precious treasure after all."

A mercenary pulled Yu Jiajia up. Disregarding her attempts to struggle, the mercenary gagged her mouth and locked a pair of handcuffs on her before dragging her away into a corner.

Likewise, Da Gang was dragged to the side like a dead mutt. He had also been handcuffed.

“Boss, the male is injured,” One of the mercenaries moved over and whispered toward the woman. She replied. “Never mind that, our objective is the girl. As for the other fellow... just kill him.”

The mercenary raised an eyebrow and pulled out a dagger. He then walked to the corner.

Seeing the man coming closer while wielding a dagger, Yu Jiajia struggled frantically and attempted to cry out. Unfortunately, her mouth was gagged and only a futile whining sound came out.

The mercenary reached Da Gang and he bent down.

It appeared that the mercenary was of a religious kind. Instead of directly stabbing the dagger forward, he extended one hand to place it upon Da Gang's forehead. Then, he started mumbling some prayers. Subsequently, the dagger moved down slowly to tear Da Gang's clothes. Both of Da Gang's outer and inner clothes were slit apart to reveal his bony chest.

The dagger came to a stop before Da Gang's heart and the man gently inhaled...

Yu Jiajia struggled desperately and tears trickled down her eyes. She frantically struggled to shout and her two legs lashed about. However, another mercenary came over and held down her legs, removing any possibility of escape for her.

“Where did you find these minions?” Ma Da observed the mercenary who was about to kill Da Gang. He narrowed his eyes and turned his gaze back to the woman. “I hate working together with normal people.”

“You do not understand. Hiring people with money to help out with an issue beats doing it yourself,” The woman said coolly. “In this world, life

is cheap. Those mercenaries... Africa, the Middle East... all you need to do is throw some money out and you can get a bunch of them. Besides, aren't they useful?"

"Mere cannon fodder," Ma Da shook his head. "Later, are you planning to throw them into the two Awakened ones?"

"As you said, mere cannon fodder," The woman smiled softly.

...

The tip of the dagger had already pierced into Da Gang's chest and bright red blood flowed out.

Yu Jiajia who was right beside became like a deflated balloon. She let out a cry of grief and slumped onto the ground.

Yu Jiajia's head tilted and she lost consciousness.

...

The mercenary's hand was still pressing onto Da Gang's forehead. His other hand pushed down lightly on the dagger and it slowly cut down. At the same time, his mouth continued mumbling the prayer.

It was at that moment...

The unconscious Da Gang suddenly opened his eyes!

At that moment, his dim-witted expression changed, becoming blank. There was no expression on his face. However, his pupils quietly studied the mercenary who was stabbing him.

The mercenary was stunned for a bit. However, he did not stop the movement of his hand.

The dagger was quickly deposited into Da Gang's body. It was so deeply embedded that even the handle had went in.

However, the mercenary's hair was standing on end, because all Da Gang did was look at him quietly. There was no change in Da Gang's expression, a cold, silent and emotionless face...

At that instant, the mercenary who was holding down Yu Jiajia suddenly

exclaimed in shock and pointed toward his companion's hand.

The dagger-wielding mercenary lowered his head and was likewise, shocked!

The dagger in his hand had been stabbed into Da Gang's body. At present though, the metal dagger was slowly melting and transforming into liquid metal!

It was just like an ice cream that had been left under the sun!

The mercenary quickly pulled his hand away. Then, his gaze fell onto the wound on Da Gang's chest to find that the dagger had already melted away! A faint silvery, metal glow shimmered around before disappearing into Da Gang's body.

The gash on his chest had also healed up. In the blink of an eye, the wound had been closed and not a single drop of blood was left.

“% ((* &%”

The mercenary loudly shouted out something.

However, he never got the chance to continue his sentence.

Da Gang's hands abruptly lashed out and the metal handcuffs instantly broke!

His hand shot out and his palm pierced directly into the mercenary's chest, right into the heart.

With a “pu”, Da Gang retracted his hand; a fist-sized heart lay within his palm. The heart was still beating!

The mercenary could not even let out a groan; he raised his head and his body slumped down to the ground.

The mercenary to the side was scared witless and he yelled out.
“Demon!”

He pulled out a handgun and fired at Da Gang!

Bang bang bang bang!

The bullets struck Da Gang's body, but not a drop of blood appeared.

Liquid metal holes appeared across the surface of his body and they slowly healed up.

Da Gang then curled the corners of his lips into a smiling like expression. He quickly inhaled and the bullets flew into his mouth. Then, he spat them out at the mercenary.

Pu pu!

Following those sounds, the bullets struck the mercenary's throat and he fell onto the ground.

...

Ma Da, Seventh Bro and the woman were caught off guard by this. They rushed over the instant they heard the commotion only to see Da Gang standing before the two dead mercenaries.

The woman's face revealed shock. She stopped moving, grabbed her longbow, nocked it and pulled it. Then, a swooshing sound rang out!

A beam of fire flew out, striking Da Gang in the face!

Da Gang's head exploded like a burst watermelon! However, no blood leaked out. Instead, there was only a wriggling mass of liquid metal.

At that point, Ma Da and his Seventh Bro had already stepped before Da Gang.

Da Gang's body suddenly darted forth. With lightning like speed, he charged toward Seventh Bro! Seventh Bro who had already pulled out a knife reacted by stabbing the knife into Da Gang's body!

Da Gang did not dodge. Despite accepting the knife attack, his body did not falter and he made contact with Seventh Bro's body.

Ma Da's face sank and he shouted. "Seventh Bro, hurry and retreat!"

Unfortunately, before Ma Da could finish his sentence, Da Gang's hand had already caught Seventh Bro in a chokehold. His fingers tightened and a "ka" sound rang out! Seventh Bro's neck was broken!

Ma Da howled out and his eyes turned red. Brandishing Fearless War

Axe, he cleaved down brutally.

Ca!

The entirety of Da Gang's arm that was holding onto Seventh Bro's neck was chopped off!

At the same time, Da Gang's head wriggled back to shape. His restored head turned to face Ma Da and grinned.

"Bastard! Go die!" Ma Da leapt into the air and Fearless War Axe transformed into a blade of light before slashing down!

Ca!

Da Gang's head was struck by this axe strike, which cleaved its way down! It directly split Da Gang's body into two!

Ma Da landed and saw the two parts of Da Gang's body that he had severed...

Before he could let out a breath of relief, Ma Da's expression fell.

"Ge ge" sounds came out of his throat.

There was a metal spike there. It had stabbed in through his back, piercing through his body and finally emerging out from his mouth!

Ma Da struggled hard to turn around.

Behind him was shockingly, the chopped off arm!

It was the arm that he had chopped off! Da Gang's arm!

The arm's finger had transformed into a sharp metal spike, which then stabbed into his body.

Ma Da fell to the ground in resentment, his eyes left open even in death.

On the ground, Da Gang's two body parts had already merged and it quickly took on a human form. He then shook his body and twisted his neck. Then, he coolly regarded the chopped off arm lying behind Ma Da.

The chopped off arm quickly melted into a pool of liquid metal and it flowed toward his feet before fusing into his body.

A new arm emerged from Da Gang's broken arm. He waved the new arm and smiled in satisfaction.

It was then that the other mercenaries within the warehouse fired out with their weapons in a frenzy.

Bang bang bang!

The sound of gunshots echoed out endlessly.

The bullets struck Da Gang, creating bullet holes all over his body. However, he ignored them and slowly walked forward. Then, he raised his left hand. His left palm transformed into a gun!

...

The intense gunfire rang out like a tempestuous rain before quickly fading away.

From the warehouse to the corners of the second floor, the surroundings and the door...

The various mercenaries had all fallen. All of them faced the same fate, a bullet shot into the middle of their foreheads!

Da Gang lowered his head and inspected the gun that was transformed out from his palm. He smiled and continued to slowly walk forward.

The woman quickly released three arrows in succession!

Then, she turned tail and ran.

The first arrow struck Da Gang on his waist and exploded, causing his body to tilt a little. The detonated area soon healed up.

The second arrow was caught by Da Gang using his mouth. He bit the arrowhead and gulped it down his body. A boom resonated and Da Gang's belly expanded outward before returning to its normal state.

As for the third arrow, Da Gang suddenly raised his hand and plucked the arrow out of the air with his palm. With a backhand toss, he threw the arrow back toward the woman.

The woman's running speed was very fast. She had already leapt up

onto the second floor and was atop a stand there. She was about to charge out through the shutters when she heard an air piercing sound closing in on her. Faced with no other choice, she could only throw herself to the side.

A loud boom echoed outward!

The shutters were destroyed and they collapsed down.

The woman fell down from the stand. However, before she fell to the ground, she made a somersault. Unfortunately, before she could steady herself, she heard a cold voice coming from her side.

“I caught you~”

Unknowingly, Da Gang’s body had appeared behind the woman!

The woman subconsciously reached for her quiver of arrows. However, Da Gang reached out, gripped her wrist and held them up high.

Da Gang’s fingers transformed into metal pliers and they held both of the woman’s hands together. He held her up and her body was suspended in the air.

“You, you... just who are you?” Astonishment filled the woman’s eyes.

Da Gang raised his head. “I am...”

His expression turned distant. He entered a contemplative state for a moment before shaking his head. “This is truly peculiar. I should have died...”

A perplexed expression suddenly appeared on his face and he seemingly became absent-minded, as he stood right there.

The woman struggled desperately. However, Da Gang’s strength was just too much for her. No matter how she tried, she could not extricate herself.

After a moment, Da Gang released a deep breath. He closed his eyes and reopened them.

“I... .. am me again. Hehe...”

As he spoke, he put the woman down the ground and dragged her with him as he slowly walked over to the corpses of Ma Da and Seventh Bro.

At that moment, the warehouse was filled with corpses. With a relaxed expression, Da Gang leisurely dragged the woman with him as he strolled through the blood-stained warehouse.

“Two~ tigers, two~ tigers, they’re so fast, they’re so fast...”

He gently hummed the nursery rhyme and walked until he reached Ma Da and Seventh Bro’s side. He bent down and searched their bodies for a bit. He found a ring from Ma Da’s finger.

“A Storage Ring? Low-end goods... still, better than nothing.”

Da Gang made a peculiar face as he pinched the ring. Probing about, he said. “It seems he is quite a poor fellow. There is nothing good here. Hmm... a Concealment Card? Thanks, I’ll be keeping this.”

He retrieved a glowing silver card from the ring. With a flick, the card transformed into a mass of light and it disappeared into his body. Next, he pinched lightly and the Storage Ring burst out!

The woman was petrified!

Da Gang turned his gaze toward the woman.

“You... just who are you? Who are you?” The woman shuddered.

“I...” Da Gang considered the question. “My current name is Da Gang... eh, that is not right, that is not right. That is not the right way to put it. Last time, my name is also Da Gang. Only... I also have another name. I believe you must have heard of that name before oh.”

As he spoke, he reached out his hand to pat the woman’s face. “Don’t worry, I won’t kill you. You are very lucky. I have this habit, you see. I generally do not kill women.”

His somewhat demented expression struck fear into the woman’s heart.

Da Gang rubbed his eyebrows. “What a load of memories... this is really giving me a headache. Eh... after I died, I was refreshed back to a normal human. It seems something interesting happened while I was a normal

human eh...”

He sighed. “What a coincidence... is this God’s arrangement? Oh, that is not right either. There is no God here. Then, is this the Development Team’s storyline setting? Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!!!”

After that, he turned his head and looked at the woman. “You can go.”

After saying that, he loosened his grip.

The woman was shocked. “You, what did you say?”

Da Gang curled the corners of his lips. “Did I not make myself clear? I said: You can go. Look at my mouth, can you understand?”

The woman shuddered again. “You... you are letting me go? You are not going to kill me?”

“Are you deaf? I just told you, I generally do not like to kill women. I also do not like to hurt women.”

“Then... are you not going to interrogate me?” The woman was shocked.

“There is nothing to interrogate,” Da Gang waved his hand. “A mere fight between ants. You think a dinosaur will care about some conflict between ants? Leave leave... aiya, hurry up will you... it seems my two ‘new friends’ are coming over.”

The woman managed to calm down and she turned. She took two steps before turning around. “You... Your Excellence... Your Excellence’s name is...”

“Are you really that curious to know who I am?” Da Gang rubbed his head and frowned. He then muttered in a low tone. “Hair... annoying.”

After that, he smiled at the woman. “My name is Da Gang. However, I have a nickname that you have probably heard of.”

After saying that, he deliberately paused and spoke out slowly.

“Greatness (dà) for the sake of the Heavens (tiān),

“Firmness (gāng) for the sake of strength (liè)!”

...

Once the woman heard what he said, her body trembled! Her face quickly filled with dread!

Her mouth was left gaping wide as she stared at Da Gang. “You, you... you are... you are... Tian... Tian...”

“Shoo shoo shoo,” Da Gang gestured with his head. “Hurry up and leave. I am going to count to three. If you are still not gone, I may regret letting you go oh.”

This time, the woman did not hesitate. She bowed toward Da Gang. “I am sorry! I didn’t think that I would end up offending you... I am leaving now! I will never offend you ever again!”

After that, the woman leapt up to the second floor and rushed out from the collapsed area. She then disappeared without a trace.

Da Gang sighed. He then walked to Yu Jiajia’s side. He observed the unconscious Yu Jiajia before rummaging out another handcuff from one of the mercenaries body. Handcuffing himself, he lay down beside Yu Jiajia.

He yawned. “Time to sleep, time to sleep... once I wake up, I will be seeing my two ‘new friends’ eh!”

...

...

—

Ma Da. Raw: ‘马达’, pinyin: ‘mǎ dá’. ‘mǎ’ (马) means horse, ‘dá’ (达) means reach.

[Author’s note: I have been hiding behind the monitor and observing carefully for the past few days.

[I found that no one managed to guess who Da Gang really is.

[Wa ha ha ha ha ha ha~ ~

[Phew, exhales deeply

[When setting up a storyline for a novel, the thing to worry about the

most is that before the good part arrives, some smart readers would already see through it.

[Thankfully, Da Gang is Tian Lie, this story set up was not seen through. feeling prideful

[Truth be told, it has been hinted a few times.

[For example, Da Gang had to witness the domestic violence committed by his father against his mother. Thus, he is always unwilling to harm women – Tian Lie just does not want to hurt women.

[Why does Tian Lie have such a violent temper, why is he so preachy: Because when he was still an ordinary person, he would be bullied since his childhood days.

[Another example is Da Gang's name: Greatness (dà) for the sake of the Heavens (tiān), firmness (gāng) for the sake of strength (liè).

[Da Gang is Tian Lie, Tian Lie is Da Gang.

[However, Da Gang is Tian Lie's name when he was still an ordinary person. After Tian Lie died, he became Da Gang. Then... due to the metal sphere's activation, he returned to become Tian Lie.

[Naturally, this time, he is no longer an Awakened. He is now an Irregularity.

[Additionally... he and Chen Xiaolian had become... friends.

[I myself am looking forward to the following part of this story ~ ~

[Lastly, we have fallen out of the top ten of the monthly ticket rankings!

[Seeking fire support!

[Seeking monthly ticket!!!].

[TL: Don't look at me, I was surprised too. >_>

[Also, the above post was written on July of 2015.]

Chapter 173: Friends?

“In other words, you do not know anything?”

Chen Xiaolian helped to prop up Yu Jiajia. After considering it, he pulled out a piece of tissue to wipe the tears and dust off her face.

Yu Jiajia was still trembling. She subconsciously reached out to hug Chen Xiaolian's arm. She shook her head vigorously. “I do not know... I was knocked unconscious. They, they wanted to kill Da Gang... Da Gang! Where is Da Gang?”

“Nothing happened, nothing happened,” Chen Xiaolian patted Yu Jiajia's back. “Nothing happened to Da Gang. He is fine, only unconscious like you.”

“Really?” Yu Jiajia raised her head and looked at Chen Xiaolian with a dubious expression.

Roddy who was by her side laughed and pulled up Da Gang who was lying on the ground. He then patted Da Gang's cheeks and said. “Look here Yu Jiajia. He is fine, nothing happened to him.”

“Then, then why... how did...” Yu Jiajia's eyes were filled with confusion. “I... clearly saw... they were going to kill Da Gang... and...”

“Don't rush it, calm down,” Chen Xiaolian handed over a bottle of water to Yu Jiajia and slowly continued. “Slowly tell me everything that happened to you. Do not be afraid, everything is fine now.”

Yu Jiajia finally calmed down. She took two gulps of water and coughed for a moment. Then, she held back her tears and slowly said. “All I remember is, after they took over the car, they knocked Da Gang unconscious. There were four of them, four of them entered the car but two of them died. The remaining two started the car... and drove here. They met up with some people here. Those people were all armed with guns. En, one of them was a woman with a bow and arrows...”

Yu Jiajia tried her best to recall the details. “They... their target appears to be me. I... I do not know why either... I do not recognize these people.”

“And then?” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes glinted. “Then, what happened?”

“They wanted to kill Da Gang and I tried to stop them. Then... I fainted,” Yu Jiajia broke into tears again.

Chen Xiaolian exchanged glances with Roddy and they silently shook their heads.

The situation... was too peculiar!

By the time they arrived here, the warehouse was almost devoid of any living person. Corpses were laid sprawling on the ground.

One thing they were able to confirm was that those corpses belonged to ordinary gun-toting people who worked as mercenaries.

As for the others... the Awakened ones had disappeared.

...

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy did not find the corpses of Ma Da and his Seventh Bro.

Thus, they were left in the dark as to whether those two kidnappers had escaped or died.

For them, this situation was incredibly strange. The kidnappers kidnapped their targets and had them tied up here. Then, the kidnappers led them here. However, once they arrived... all they saw was a warehouse full of dead kidnappers while the captives were unharmed!

“Could it be... did someone step forward to help out?” Roddy scratched his head. “Bloody Hell, this matter is too abnormal.”

Chen Xiaolian inspected the surroundings and did his best to gather his thoughts.

“When we were moving over here, the radar showed three green dots. In other words, there should be three Awakened ones here.”

Chen Xiaolian slowly continued. “According to Yu Jiajia – among the four kidnappers we encountered, two had died in the car. Then, the remaining two drove here and... met up with their accomplices here. And

one of them is an Awakened – thus, we have three green dots on the radar.”

“Yes,” Roddy nodded.

“Next, something strange happened on the radar,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “Another green dot appeared here, totalling up to four green dots!”

Chen Xiaolian kneaded his eyebrows. “A fight must have broken out between the four green dots. Because three of those green dots then disappeared! Then, according to the radar, the one remaining green dot quickly ran off before we arrived.”

“You mean, an Awakened appeared and killed these kidnappers before quickly leaving?” Roddy smiled wryly. “If that person came to save Yu Jiajia, why did that person not take her together? Why leave her behind? Did that person purposely left her behind for us?”

Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

He too, was feeling perplexed. This whole thing was not making sense.

Assuming that the Awakened was sent by Qiao Yifeng... why would the Awakened leave Yu Jiajia after killing off the kidnappers?

If not, then who was the one who saved them? Why run away after killing off the kidnappers?

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were not aware about Da Gang’s situation.

The most important part was that Da Gang had obtained a Concealment Card from the corpse of Ma Da. The item could be used to conceal one’s identity and coordinates. After using it, it would temporarily stop the radar from revealing his coordinates. Thus, Da Gang’s green dot disappeared from the radar.

This had misled Chen Xiaolian and Roddy.

They mistook the green dot from the woman who ran off as the one who helped save the captives.

After pondering upon it a little longer to no avail, Chen Xiaolian and

Roddy looked at each other and sighed.

“Regardless, what is important is that they are fine,” Chen Xiaolian gave a strained smile. “Let’s leave this place quickly. We should not linger in such a dangerous place.”

Roddy agreed.

Roddy propped up Da Gang while Chen Xiaolian carried Yu Jiajia. The four of them then left the warehouse. Finding a car on the outside, they quickly left the factory.

Roddy was in charge of driving. On the way, Chen Xiaolian took off his jacket and placed it over Yu Jiajia.

Yu Jiajia then took out her mobile phone and made a call.

After the call was picked up, Yu Jiajia cried out into the phone. “I... I was kidnapped...”

After that, she started to cry non-stop.

Seeing as Yu Jiajia was crying to the point where she was no longer able to say anything coherent, Chen Xiaolian took the mobile phone from her. Listening to the mobile phone, he immediately recognized Qiao Yifeng’s voice.

“Mr. Qiao, it is me.”

“It’s you?” Qiao Yifeng’s voice became louder. “Chen Xiaolian, why are you...”

“Yu Jiajia was kidnapped, I am bringing her back,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly.

“... ..” Qiao Yifeng calmed down. A few seconds later, he said. “Where are you?”

...

One hour later, their car drove back into the city area and stopped at a certain spot within the city centre.

A few minutes later, two sedan cars came over and parked by the side of

the street. A group of men alighted from the cars. Chen Xiaolian recognized the one in the lead position; it was none other than Qiao Yifeng's bodyguard – the Awakened.

The man was still wearing the black coloured suit. Walking over, he nodded to Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian then moved to the side and pulled open the back door.

The man in black looked at Yu Jiajia who was sitting behind. “Miss Yu, I am here to pick you up.”

Yu Jiajia's eyes were bloodshot and she cast a complex expression at Chen Xiaolian.

“Go home, get a good rest and you will get well soon,” Chen Xiaolian said with a warm smile.

There was an apparent unwillingness in Yu Jiajia's expression. However, she still got off the car. Then, she left while being flanked by the group of men in black.

Before leaving, the man in black secretly made eye contact with Chen Xiaolian. Understanding what he meant, Chen Xiaolian moved together with him to the side of the street where they exchanged words.

“I will be taking Miss Yu Jiajia.”

“En

“Did you find out who the kidnappers were?” The man in black asked.

“There were four Awakened kidnappers. They also had accomplices who met up with them, a group of gunmen led by an Awakened. The strange thing was, when we arrived, Yu Jiajia had already been saved. The one who saved her should be an Awakened. However, we did not meet that person. That person killed off all the kidnappers and left before we arrived at the scene,” Chen Xiaolian told the man in black about what happened in the warehouse. “I originally thought that Mr. Qiao had sent someone to save her.”

The man in black was stunned for a moment; however, he did not say

anything. He only looked at Chen Xiaolian. “On behalf of Mr. Qiao, I thank you.”

“There is no need... truth is, we did not do anything,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly.

The man in black nodded his head. “We will take over from here and handle it.”

Chen Xiaolian considered it and said. “I want to talk with Mr. Qiao. There is something important I need to talk to him. It is about...”

“I do not know anything about Miss Qiao Qiao’s matter,” The man in black seemed to have guessed what Chen Xiaolian wanted to say. Then, he bowed toward Chen Xiaolian and said his farewell.

“Wait a minute,” Chen Xiaolian called out to him. “Please tell Mr. Qiao that this is a very important matter! I need to discuss it with him!”

The man in black stopped. He then turned around and sighed as he looked at Chen Xiaolian.

He appeared hesitant for a moment. Then, he slowly walked forward again.

“I have some words to say, consider it as an advice,” The man in black said softly. “You and your companion is pretty good – considering that you are newbies, I believe that you are Awakened ones with good potential. However... compared to our guild, your strength is presently far from enough. Thus... it may be best to leave Miss Qiao Qiao with us. This would be better for her.”

“Things are not that simple!” Chen Xiaolian’s face became heavy.

“Young people would always prioritize the matters of love above all else,” The man in black smiled softly. “Perhaps, after a few more years, you will no longer think that way – assuming of course, that you get to live that long.”

Chen Xiaolian’s face twisted. “You should know this; Qiao Qiao is still a member of our guild! The fact that she has not left our guild means that

you people are now holding her by force! Moreover... you should understand as well, once the next instance dungeon is issued, my guild members must participate in the instance dungeon. If they do not participate, they will receive punishment!"

"Mr. Qiao will properly consider this matter. After all, he is Miss Qiao Qiao's father, isn't he?" The man in black frowned.

"He might want his daughter to die! And then be refreshed back into an ordinary person!" Chen Xiaolian said coldly.

The man in black frowned. He maintained his silence and coldly regarded Chen Xiaolian.

"Mr. Qiao is someone who had been refreshed before... he no longer has his memories from his Awakened days. From his point of view, he might believe that Awakened ones have two lives! After dying once, they can be resurrected back as an ordinary person! However..." Chen Xiaolian said coolly. "You are an Awakened. Surely, you must have heard of this theory..."

"What?" The man in black's face appeared disturbed.

"An Awakened who died... will be refreshed back to become an ordinary person... however, the person who is refreshed, is that person still the original person? Or... just a back-up copy of the code?" Chen Xiaolian said coldly. "Even if the back-up copy looks the same as the original... is it really the same person?"

The man in black was startled!

However, he maintained his silence and continued to look at Chen Xiaolian with a complicated expression. After making a bow, he turned and left.

After taking several steps, he spoke out.

"I will convey those words to Mr. Qiao."

...

Watching the cars leave, Chen Xiaolian angrily struck out with a fist

toward the sidewall. With a bang, cracks appeared on the wall.

Roddy walked over and asked. "What happened?"

"We will have to wait and see," Chen Xiaolian gritted his teeth.

"Actually, back then, we could..."

"Force him to stay?" Chen Xiaolian forced out a smile. "It's useless. Qiao Yifeng would not give up his daughter for the sake of one subordinate. Taking that kind of action will probably not be of any use."

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian sighed. "We'll wait for a few more days! If it's still not... then we'll have to confront him!"

"En, no matter what, we cannot let Qiao Qiao die... and Soo Soo as well," Roddy smiled bitterly.

...

Soon, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were able to feel relieved as Da Gang finally woke up Outwardly, Da Gang appeared fine. However, he was very quiet – this did not arouse any suspicions from Chen Xiaolian or Roddy. After all, Da Gang was usually a very quiet person with a wooden expression on his face.

Still, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy was at a lost at how to explain the matter to Da Gang.

How should they explain the incredible battle strength that he and Roddy possessed? How should they explain the kidnapping incident and the killing...

This incident was something that was hard to explain to an ordinary person like Da Gang.

To Chen Xiaolian's relief, Da Gang did not inquire about anything.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy drove Da Gang home. Then, they left. However, did not immediately leave Hangzhou. Instead, they stayed in Hangzhou for the night.

...

“Two~ tigers, two~ tigers, they’re so fast, they’re so fast...”

Da Gang was standing before a mirror and the corners of his lips were curled upward as he looked at himself. He held a razor in his hand and was carefully shaving off his hair. Not long after, a shiny bald head was reflected off the mirror.

Watching his figure through the mirror, Da Gang stroked his face in a rather dissatisfied manner.

“I almost forgot... back then, I look so thin.”

He rolled his eyes. Instantly, the face reflected in the mirror began to swell up.

The muscles and bones of his entire body began changing as they abruptly expanded!

In but moments, the thin face reflected off the mirror had become a mighty looking square shaped face with strong facial outlines. His eyebrows were slightly raised, his eyes deep and both of them were filled with a cold and domineering aura.

The originally skinny body had transformed into a tall, mighty and robust figure.

At that moment, the Da Gang reflected by the mirror had been restored to his appearance as Tian Lie who appeared in the Tokyo instance dungeon.

“This looks more pleasing to the eye...”

Da Gang smiled and tossed away the razor. Turning around, he walked back into the dilapidated room and sat down on the dirty surface of the bed.

Da Gang looked around at the dimly lit room.

He looked at the old and dilapidated desk, at the broken window wrapped in plastic paper... then, his eyes fell onto the top part of the bed.

On the top side of the bed was a photo placed inside a picture frame.

Inside the picture was a thin looking Da Gang. He was being embraced by an average looking middle-aged woman. Both Da Gang and the woman wore a smile on their faces.

When his eyes came to rest upon that picture, the light within Da Gang's eyes turned dim.

He exhaled softly and extended his hand outward. He picked up the picture frame and gently caressed it.

Suddenly, a trace of sorrow appeared within Da Gang's eyes!

Ka!

He crushed the glass surface of the picture frame!

"Why did I survive? Why must I remember all of these once more?"

The crushed picture frame within Da Gang's palm was then rolled up into a ball!

Soon however, the anger in his eyes faded. He sat up and carefully unfolded the picture frame before pulling out the picture placed inside. Then, he used his rough fingers to smoothen the picture.

His eyes gradually grew distant...

Da Gang recalled the events that occurred all those years ago. Back then, he was a small and thin child who had to witness that ill-tempered man's savage treatment toward his mother; how that ill-tempered man would then punch him after that and how the kind hearted woman would use her frail body to protect him...

He recalled that terrifying night when his father came at him with a knife! In order to protect him, his mother fought against the man... due to fear; he ran away from the house and hid himself throughout the night.

At daybreak, he returned home and saw many police officers there. There lying on the ground, with a white cloth over her, was his mother.

From that day onward, he lost his home.

His mother who would always protect him had become a corpse, left in

a box within a cemetery.

The man was put in jail.

As for himself, he became a kid that everyone would bully.

Until one day, an accident led to him being sucked into an instance dungeon... and he became an Awakened!

Following that incident, the weak little boy grew, one step at a time into the one who struck fear into everyone's hearts, the Angel Killer!

Perhaps it was due to the shadow of his childhood that, after Da Gang became Tian Lie, the outer body he made for himself was a valiant and tall figure, brimming with an atmosphere of dominance.

However, even if he were to cover it all, he could not let himself forget about all those things.

Including his mother's teachings of not hurting a woman.

And also... the nursery rhyme that his mother sang to him each time he had to suffer from a beating.

"Two~ tigers... two~ tigers... they're so fast, they're so fast... .."

Da Gang tightly gripped the picture held in his hand and... a teardrop fell onto the surface of the picture.

Da Gang gently sighed and stood up.

His hand continued clutching onto the picture. However, his tall and huge body suddenly withered down.

Moments later, after the liquid metal had finished flowing through his body, his outer appearance had changed from the mighty Tian Lie back to the weak looking Da Gang.

...

At dawn, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were in the hotel lobby, preparing to check out of the hotel when Chen Xiaolian's mobile phone suddenly rang.

Answering the call, he found Da Gang on the other side of the phone call.

“What you said back then, does it still count?”

“Eh? What?” Chen Xiaolian was surprised.

“Your invitation for me to follow you to Jinling.”

Da Gang’s voice was very calm.

“Of course!” Chen Xiaolian smiled, feeling surprised. “You changed your mind?”

“Where are you? I will go find you right now.”

After a while, Da Gang arrived at the hotel and met up with Chen Xiaolian and Roddy.

Chen Xiaolian saw Da Gang enter with only a big bag pack on his shoulders – he recognized it. That was the bag of money that he had asked Roddy to secretly leave inside Da Gang’s home.

“I will follow you to Jinling,” Da Gang handed the bag pack to Chen Xiaolian. “This is something you left in my room, right? I will return it to you.”

Chen Xiaolian thought it through and accepted the bag. He then looked at Da Gang and asked. “Are you sure about this?”

“Yes,” Da Gang nodded his head as he answered.

“You... did not bring any luggage with you?”

Da Gang curled the corners of his lips and smiled. “There is nothing to bring.”

Upon his chest was a picture.

“That is fine,” Chen Xiaolian laughed. “You do not need to bring anything, everything you need can be found in Jinling! We are friends! There is no need for you to worry about anything.”

Da Gang looked into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes and appeared to be smiling – the expression he made looked just as dim-witted as before.

However, there was a subtle curve at the corners of his lips.

Friends? Interesting!

Chapter 174: London

As they were walking out from the Jinling train station, Chen Xiaolian, Roddy and Da Gang were walking side by side when they heard someone shouting from behind. Turning their heads, they saw that a man with thick glasses was running toward them.

“... .. Doctor Mu?”

Chen Xiaolian recognized the man.

After rushing over, Doctor Mu gasped for breath and looked at Chen Xiaolian. Then, he looked at Da Gang and Roddy. Finally, his gaze came to rest upon Da Gang's body. “I caught sight of you just as I was coming out from the station. I thought it might be you so I quickly ran over. I didn't think that it would actually be you!”

Da Gang did not say anything. Chen Xiaolian on the other hand, smiled. “Doctor Mu, what are you doing here?”

“It just so happened that I am involved with a programme. It is an exchange programme where our hospital swaps doctors with another hospital in Jinling. I am sent to XX Hospital in Jinling as an exchange doctor as part of my training programme,” Doctor Mu said. Then, he looked at Da Gang. “How is your body holding up?”

Da Gang shook his head and said coolly. “I am fine.”

There was a complicated look in Doctor Mu's eyes. “Truth be told... after returning to the hospital yesterday, I had looked up on your injuries and the pictures taken when you were admitted... this incident is too strange. The pictures taken clearly showed that...”

He shook his head and his expression turned distressed. “Perhaps there was an error somewhere. There is no other explanation to what had happened. It seems that the misdiagnosis from back then had caused you to suffer, wasting so much money in the process.”

“It's all right,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. His impression toward this Doctor Mu was very good. “You are a very responsible doctor. At any rate, since

you are here in Jinling, let us exchange our phone numbers. If you come across any difficulties here, just give us a call. After all, we are the local residents here.”

Doctor Mu did not refuse and exchanged numbers with Chen Xiaolian. However, it was apparent that he was more interested in Da Gang. He kept suggesting to Da Gang to go to the Jinling hospital that he was now working in for a body check-up. Still, Chen Xiaolian had helped Da Gang to turn him down.

Doctor Mu could do nothing. He could also say nothing toward that decision. Besides, who would be willing to go to the hospital when they feel fine?

Chen Xiaolian had wanted to buy Doctor Mu a meal as a token of friendliness. However, Doctor Mu had rejected the offer. According to him, he had to quickly report to the hospital. Thus, they went their separate ways after their meeting in the train station.

Da Gang's arrival led to another guest in Chen Xiaolian's house.

That was something of an inconvenience.

Thus, Roddy the plutocrat stepped forward and rented up the entire floor of the fitness centre. The several rooms beside the training room were turned into a dormitory.

That way, everyone was able to live in the fitness centre.

Time passed and another week went by leisurely.

Da Gang simply went with the flow and stayed in the fitness centre's dorm. Every day, he would help keep the place clean and hygienic. He would then spend the rest of his time in his own room, reading books. He showed a rather taciturn temperament.

Occasionally, he would follow them out for a meal. There, he would sit beside and have his meal while rarely saying anything. After some time, Lun Tai and Bei Tai came to understand this temperament of his and did not suspect anything.

During training time, Chen Xiaolian and the others were originally quite worried that Da Gang will become shocked once he caught sight of the way they were training themselves.

Then, on one day, Da Gang inadvertently saw Lun Tai training Xia Xiaolei in combat techniques. Watching Xia Xiaolei getting whipped by Lun Tai, Da Gang simply looked on silently for a moment before turning away to continue doing his own stuff.

Due to that, Lun Tai and Bei Tai came to like the taciturn fellow.

Someone who was not causing problems, someone who was not a chatterbox, someone who worked honestly while maintaining a calm atmosphere – people like this would never be hated no matter where they go.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy continued going to school. However, the difference between the two gradually became obvious.

Chen Xiaolian went to school every day, seemingly cherishing the feelings of normal everyday life. Roddy on the other hand, was the opposite. The fellow's rate of attendance gradually fell and the number of times he played truant increased. Slowly, Chen Xiaolian was the only one left going to school.

Every day after school, he would go to the fitness centre. Occasionally, he would cook meals for everyone.

In fact, Chen Xiaolian's cooking skills were nothing to brag about. However, every time he cooked, Da Gang would eat it all up.

Although the days were going by uneventfully, for Chen Xiaolian, the biggest problem within his heart was becoming inevitable!

Chen Xiaolian's patience was almost running out. He made up his mind. If there were still no news from Qiao Yifeng, then he would have to take the initiative to find Qiao Yifeng and discuss the matter with him...

That evening, Chen Xiaolian was inside the fitness centre. He was venting his anger by punching a sandbag.

The thick leather sandbag with several layers upon it was burst apart from the impact of his punch. He then took down the sandbag and tossed it aside.

As he was putting it down the corner, his mobile phone suddenly rang out.

He went to pick up the phone and found that it was an unfamiliar number. Additionally... it was from abroad.

“Hello?”

After accepting the call, the voice that came through the phone gave Chen Xiaolian a shock!

“Xiaolian oppa!”

“Soo Soo?”

Chen Xiaolian quickly gripped onto the mobile phone. “Soo Soo! Where are you?”

Through the phone, Soo Soo sounded short of breath. Seemingly lowering her voice, she quickly said. “Xiaolian oppa! Hurry up and get us out of here. Me and sister are being held by them. They won’t let us leave. I am calling to you secretly. Oh, no! They are coming; I need to hang off now! Hurry up and find us! We are in London!”

After she said that, the call ended.

Chen Xiaolian held onto the mobile phone and listened to the beeping tone indicating that the call had ended. A few seconds later, he attempted to call the number. However, no one answered.

He pondered it and ended the call. He also did not try to call the number again – he feared that it would cause unnecessary problems for Soo Soo.

Chen Xiaolian quickly ran out of the training room and into the resting room beside.

“Roddy! Roddy!”

...

“London?”

Roddy’s eyes were wide open.

“That’s right, London,” Chen Xiaolian sighed and smiled wryly. “Old Man Qiao sure is vicious. He actually sent them to London. He is probably afraid that we would find them if they were within the country.”

“For him... something like this is not too difficult,” Roddy smiled grudgingly. Then, he turned toward Chen Xiaolian. “What do you plan on doing?”

“Go find them!” Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate. “Bring them back even if we have to use force! Even if we fail, we must at least meet up with Old Man Qiao and talk things through with him!”

Since the decision was made, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy quickly took action.

The procedures involving passports and visas were handled by Roddy. Even before this, Chen Xiaolian was someone who would always travel around. Thus, his passport was readily available. As for the matters regarding visas, that was not an issue for Roddy.

After discussing it through, they decided to have Xia Xiaolei leave behind while Lun Tai and Bei Tai followed them to London – in case a fight were to happen, with his present battle strength, Xia Xiaolei would not be of much help.

On the third day, Chen Xiaolian, Roddy, Lun Tai and Bei Tai got on the plane to London.

After ten plus hours, the plane landed in the London Heathrow International Airport.

Although the ten plus hours spent on the plane was exhausting, for the four of them who have had their bodies enhanced, the flight was not a problem. More importantly, the four of them had no need to carry any luggage. Everything was thrown into Chen Xiaolian’s Storage Watch – the space afforded inside was as big as three containers combined.

After the four of them walked out of the airport, they rushed toward the city.

In the evening, Roddy managed to, through the municipal system, find the location where Soo Soo had made the call from two days ago.

It was a public telephone by the street.

Chen Xiaolian and his group quickly moved to the location area and found the phone booth.

The phone booth was located within the corner of a very narrow street – most of the streets in London were not wide.

Chen Xiaolian attempted to call the number using his mobile phone. Sure enough, ringing sounds came from the phone booth.

“It appears this is it,” Roddy sighed. Looking up and down the street, he frowned. “How are we going to find...”

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes as he surveyed the area. Suddenly, he extended his hand out and pointed.

Across the street was a modest sized restaurant. Clear window walls allowed the people inside to view what was happening outside. In addition, there were also some open-air cafés and stores.

Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “We’ll split up. Go ask around in those places and see if we can find any clues.”

Thus, the four of them split up. Each of them had the picture of Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo with them. They went around the pubs, restaurants, cafes, stores in the vicinity and inquired about them.

Chen Xiaolian held on the his mobile phone that had the picture of Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo as he walked out of a restaurant after a fruitless round of attempt. As he was walking out, he saw Roddy running over, gasping for breath. Chen Xiaolian quickly ran over and asked. “Anything?”

Roddy nodded and he said quickly. “The pub in front. I showed him Soo Soo’s picture and he told me that he saw her before. However, she was

soon taken away by several adults.”

Pausing, Roddy smiled bitterly. “According to the man, he saw that Soo Soo was a little girl from the east. So were the adults who had escorted her away. They were all Chinese. Thus, nobody cared about it. It was only because of Soo Soo’s attire, she was wearing very special clothes, that he had noticed her. Her clothes were clearly the clothes worn by a child of a wealthy family.”

“And then?”

Roddy pointed in the direction of a street. “He said that she was taken somewhere in that direction.”

After meeting up with Lun Tai and Bei Tai, the four of them moved along the street – in the direction pointed out by the witness.

Soon, the street came to an end. They stood still.

Before them was an outdoor pier by the side of the River Thames.

They brought out Soo Soo’s pictures and asked around the cafes beside the pier. In the end, they managed to get some information.

According to a waitress from one of the cafes, she saw a group of Asians boarding a boat together, it was a private yacht. Then, they left – she seemed to recall seeing a little Asian girl with them as well.

Private yacht?

Chen Xiaolian’s eyebrows furrowed together.

Considering how big the River Thames was, the many piers located along the river and the high number of yachts travelling through the river... only Heaven would know where they would move to land. Where would they go...

Roddy swore in a whisper. “How in the son of bitch are we supposed to find them!”

Chen Xiaolian raised his head and inspected the surrounding area. Suddenly, he found a surveillance camera set up some distant away by a street.

“Roddy, look!”

Roddy turned his head to follow Chen Xiaolian’s gaze.

Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “I recall seeing a news report before. A few years ago... when London was hosting the Olympic games, it boasts a total of 500,000 surveillance cameras! I think...”

“I understand!” Roddy’s eyes lit up. However, he soon frowned. “Transferring the videos for those surveillance cameras is not easy... I do not have the ability to hack into the police’s surveillance system. My ability is Mechanical Heart, not Internet Heart eh... I’m not quite capable of hacking.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Lun Tai who was standing beside them heard what they were talking about and pondered the matter. “Maybe we can think of something else.”

“Oh?”

Lun Tai slowly said. “In every place, where there is light, there is darkness. We foreigners may be incapable of doing something like this. But, some gang leaders would surely have a way.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Lun Tai, who smiled. “We have been to Europe before for an instance dungeon. Bei Tai came to befriend two fellows here. Maybe they can help find out if there is any method.”

The expression on Bei Tai’s face was cautious. “The two fellows I am acquainted with are involved with the trading of firearms. However... they might be able to get the police’s surveillance videos. I can try to go find those acquaintances.”

“Then, we’ll try that first,” Chen Xiaolian quickly agreed. “We’ll split up! Lun Tai and Bei Tai, you two move together and find Bei Tai’s friend. See if there is any method to find the police’s surveillance videos. As for me...”

He took a deep breath and looked at the River Thames before him. “Roddy and I will look for the yacht along the river... even if it’s dependent

on luck; at least it is better than just staying around in a hotel and waiting senselessly for news.”

Chen Xiaolian was the Guild Leader. After seeing that there was no objection, he had them split up.

Roddy quickly made a call to a yacht rental company and chartered a small-size yacht with the permit to sail upon the River Thames. Then, both Roddy and Chen Xiaolian boarded the yacht and sailed along the River Thames to search around – although this method was quite senseless by itself and the chances of it finding anything was pretty much close to zero, it was still as Chen Xiaolian had said, better than staying idle while waiting for news.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai left together to meet up with Bei Tai’s ‘friends’.

...

Truthfully, it was hard to find anything by watching out from the yacht while sailing along the River Thames. But along the way, they could see the famed Tower of London and the London Eye – however, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were not in the mood for sightseeing.

During the night, the scenery of the surface of the River Thames was quite something.

After drifting about upon the surface of the river for nearly two hours, the staff members of the yacht reminded the two of them that the vision of the river would become poor at night. They advised the two of them to dock the yacht.

Both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy felt anxious.

At that moment however, something occurred to make them even more anxious!

[System prompt: Instance dungeon selection is in progress. Your guild has been selected to participate in an instance dungeon. The comprehensive details for the instance dungeon will be issued out in 24 hours’ time. To the relevant guilds, please make the proper preparations.]

“F**k!”

Chen Xiaolian was unable to contain himself and he swore out.

Chapter 175: Countess

Instance dungeon! A damnable instance dungeon! Of all times, it had to be now!

Unfortunately, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy could do nothing about it. Additionally, the both of them had been bracing themselves for it.

After all, roughly one month had passed since the Tokyo instance dungeon. Generally, the period between instance dungeons was only that long. For the instance dungeon selection to occur now was something that was beyond their control.

“24 hours,” Chen Xiaolian’s visage was ugly to behold. “We only have twenty four hours to find Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo.”

“Did the system send the information regarding the instance dungeon over?”

“Not yet, we will need to wait,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head. “According to the system, the details will only be issued out after 24 hours.”

At the same time, Lun Tai and Bei Tai had also received the prompt.

The two of them quickly called over. However, Lun Tai and Bei Tai also brought a piece of good news with them.

“I found a friend with connections with the police. They can get the surveillance videos,” Bei Tai said slowly. “However, we will need to pay quite a bit: 10,000 pounds.”

“Money is not an issue,” Chen Xiaolian quickly replied. “However, we are currently pressed for time.”

“The other party said that as long as we can produce the money, we can get the video tonight.”

...

One hour later, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy met up with the two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai. There, they handed the 10,000 pounds in cash to Bei

Tai.

Bei Tai walked ahead alone as he moved toward a chair in a plaza. Moments later, he made an exchange with an intermediary and came back with a portable hard disk.

“It seems you have quite the circle of friends,” Roddy said with an extremely envious look on his face.

Lun Tai laughed. “It’s only so-so in Europe. If we were to go to Afghanistan, he would be like fish in water. [1]”

Chen Xiaolian carefully regarded Bei Tai who responded by laughing out. “I actually hope I do not have to return there ever again.”

The four of them entered a hotel and used a computer to access the portable hard disk. Soon, the surveillance videos were copied out.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai were very careful with this matter. They were soon able to pinpoint the exact location that they wanted to see on the surveillance videos. They were soon looking at the street located between the phone booth and the pier. The time shown on the video was the exact time that Soo Soo had made the call to Chen Xiaolian.

Soon, what Chen Xiaolian was looking for appeared on the computer screen.

On the screen, he saw Soo Soo appear. Then, she ran toward the phone booth alone and made the call. After a brief conversation, she ended the call. At that point in time, several Asian looking people appeared on the screen.

Seeing these people coming over, Soo Soo showed good behaviour and did not resist as those people took her away. They took Soo Soo toward the pier by the River Thames.

The surveillance camera recorded everything that happened along the way.

“Six people,” Lun Tai who was looking at the video said. “Did you notice? Five of them are probably ordinary humans. As for the male

walking behind, he is most likely an Awakened.”

“Why?” Roddy asked.

“Because he has the most relaxed expression,” The answer did not come from Lun Tai, but Chen Xiaolian. He stared at the screen. “The other five must be ordinary bodyguards. They appear very nervous but very professional. However, look at the male walking behind. Unlike the other bodyguards, when walking, he has his hands inside his pockets and he did not bother checking the surroundings. He appears reckless... also, look here.”

Chen Xiaolian pointed at the screen. “Look at his face, the way his mouth is moving... he seems to be whistling.”

Roddy narrowed his eyes.

The man who was whistling within the screen was not young. He appeared to be in his thirties with a medium build. He wore a casual blazer instead of the thick old-fashioned formal suit. His most striking aspect was his hair.

The fellow had long hair and he wore thick circular glasses. He appeared like someone who worked in the artistic field.

Several different surveillance videos were aligned together and they were quickly able to see the six of them leading Soo Soo toward the pier and into a yacht.

That concluded the video.

Chen Xiaolian stared at the last screen and he quickly said. “Reverse it a little.”

A few seconds later, Chen Xiaolian called out. “There, stop it!”

Roddy immediately hit the pause button.

The video was stopped. There, the yacht on the pier had already moved out slightly, exposing part of its body.

Upon the surface of the yacht were a business tag and the vessel’s number.

“Check out the yacht,” Chen Xiaolian’s eyes flashed.

In a business world where the flow of information had been greatly developed, checking the details regarding a business tag was not a difficult matter.

Soon, they were able to find what they were looking for.

“Found it, Terrence (tài lún) Brothers boat rental company,” Roddy looked at the information shown on the surface of the computer screen. “The yacht belongs to the company.”

It was currently in the middle of the night. Thus, they had to patiently wait for dawn to arrive.

At nine in the morning, Roddy and Chen Xiaolian went together to the Westminster Area of London to find that boat rental company.

Outwardly, the company did not appear to be too big. However, Roddy had checked it out yesterday. Through the internet, he found that this company was quite famous within this field. It could also be considered a veteran boat rental company. The reason why it did not appear big was because, in London or anywhere else in Europe, many well-known companies of their respective fields would not build a particularly ostentatious office, unlike what was happening in their country.

Entering the ‘Terrence Brothers’ rental company, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy gave the pretence that they wanted to rent a yacht. Soon, a dedicated staff member came over to introduce their ships. The two of them held back their feelings of impatience and put on an act of checking the ships out. It did not take much and they soon found the yacht that had appeared on the video in one of the pictures shown.

After inquiring about the yacht from the staff member, the fellow went to inquire about the yacht. The staff member then regrettably informed them that the yacht had already been rented out.

Chen Xiaolian exchanged looks with Roddy – it appeared that they have found what they were looking for!

The following was much easier.

Roddy stepped forward and used money to buy off the staff member. And thus, they were able to acquire the information regarding the customer who had rented the yacht.

They acquired an address and a telephone number.

“Kensington...” As he walked out from the boat rental company, Chen Xiaolian inspected the address they acquired.

It was one of the famous spots in London for the rich.

The four of them then drove toward the address.

After over an hour, the four of them stopped the car outside a club that was clearly meant for the rich.

“The address seems to indicate this place,” The four of them looked at the building situated before them. It appeared to be a newly constructed building. Its outer surface was able to successfully blend the appearance of both modern and classic styles together.

This club for the rich was generally similar to those organizations like jockey clubs. The club can offer many services, including accommodation services.

“Could Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo be held here by their father?” Roddy let off a whistle.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at the time.

It was presently eleven in the morning.

“Lun Tai, Bei Tai, stay in the car. Roddy and I will enter to check it out. Keep the walkie-talkies on. If anything happens, Lun Tai is to rush in to help. Bei Tai will stay in the car to keep it ready at all times,” Chen Xiaolian made up his mind. “Since the soft approach won’t do, we’ll have to go with the hard approach!”

Roddy laughed. “Are you sure about this? Are you not afraid of offending your future father-in-law?”

Chen Xiaolian glared at him.

The both of them got off the car and walked into the club. However, they encountered an obstacle when they were in the lobby.

Apparently, this place was for members only. A middle-aged man wearing suit with the aura of a British butler stopped them. After a simple inquiry, he found that the two of them were not members and he denied them entry.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Roddy who produced a mobile phone and showed the pictures of Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo, attempting to get some information from the man.

However, the man politely but firmly refused to provide any information. Despite Roddy's attempt to bribe him off, the British butler had firmly rejected him. After toughening his stance toward the two of them, he showed them out.

"Go walk around from the outside and see if there is any way to get inside."

Chen Xiaolian pulled Roddy out from the lobby and out of the club. After they reached the outside area, they prepared to circle around the club to check out the layout of the area.

It was then that a black coloured Rolls Royce slowly reached the front door of the club. After the car came to a halt, the chauffeur moved down and walked to the back of the car to open the door.

A slender and tall figure emerged from inside the car.

She wore grey-coloured clothes with a black-coloured long skirt, which appeared traditional in style. However, due to the tight design of the long skirt, her beautiful figure became evident.

A grey-haired middle-aged butler followed by her side while maintaining a distance of half a step behind her.

An exquisite pair of eyes turned about unintentionally and they happened to fall upon Chen Xiaolian and Roddy's backs. The pair of exquisite eyes immediately narrowed.

She frowned and the middle-aged butler quickly stepped forward. The woman then whispered into his ear while her eyes moved to indicate Chen Xiaolian and Roddy who was not too far away. The butler then nodded his head.

The woman walked into the club. The butler on the other hand, went to the person-in-charge of admitting entrance to the club and discussed something with him in hushed voices.

If Chen Xiaolian were to turn his head around at this time, he would immediately recognize the woman. She was...

Miao Yan [2]!

...

“The two of them came looking for information. They also tried bribing for it, but were rejected.”

A few minutes later, Miao Yan was seated within a lounge, holding onto a cup of red Ceylon tea with her slender fingers as she listened to the report by her middle-aged butler.

“Oh?”

Miao Yan’s eyes were calm. She gently placed down the cup of tea that she was holding. Slowly, a look of deliberation appeared on her face.

“They were looking for two Asian Chinese girls,” The middle-aged butler said in a low tone. “Mistress, should I contact the security personnel to take care of it?”

“Not at the moment,” Miao Yan said coolly. Thinking further into it, she continued. “I remember meeting him before in Tokyo. There, he had mistaken me for someone else. Hmm, it was at the elevator in the Tokyo’s Mandarin Oriental Hotel.”

“Then, what should I do?” The middle-aged butler slowly said.

Miao Yan considered the issue. Suddenly, a complicated expression flashed across her eyes. She took a deep breath and said. “Go out and invite those two gentlemen over. I wish to talk with them.”

The middle-aged butler hesitated for a moment. However, seeing the look of determination in the mistress' eyes, he sighed. With a slight bow, he turned around and left.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy circled around the club and were discussing and making preparations to secretly enter through a certain area...

At that moment, the middle-aged butler brought two security personnel over.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy soon noticed them.

"Gentlemen," The middle-aged butler maintained a polite demeanour. However, his eyes were looking only at Chen Xiaolian. Clearly, the middle-aged butler too, was able to recognize Chen Xiaolian. "May I inquire what is it that the two of you are looking for?"

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy did not say anything. Chen Xiaolian stared at the middle-aged butler. He felt that the butler was vaguely familiar – back when he was in Tokyo, all his attention was upon Miao Yan. Thus, he did not place too much attention toward those who were beside her.

"We are just looking around," Roddy answered.

The middle-aged butler smiled. "My employer wishes to invite the two of you in. Is it perhaps convenient for you two?"

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian and Roddy immediately exchanged glances with one another.

Could it be... did Qiao Yifeng send them? Has he already noticed our arrival?

That was what both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy were thinking.

However, Chen Xiaolian was quick to come to a decision. If Qiao Yifeng had sent them, that meant they had been discovered. Since that was the case, they should simply walk inside in broad daylight. If their discussion failed to bear fruit... should the need to make a move arise, they will just have to act accordingly.

"Let's go then. We humbly accept this invitation," Chen Xiaolian spoke

with a heavy tone.

As they re-entered the lobby of the club, the butler like staff member at the entrance revealed a calm smile on his face. Even after seeing Chen Xiaolian and Roddy walk past him, he maintained that same expression. It was as though he could no longer recall the earlier incident where the two of them had tried to bribe him off.

The interior of the club was decorated entirely in the image of an aristocratic British palace; the furniture and furnishings inside were from the Victorian era and oil paintings hung from the walls.

Everything inside exuded an atmosphere of luxurious extravagance.

After walking into a lounge, the middle-aged butler pushed open a door and Chen Xiaolian's face turned shocked!

His gaze fell onto the figure seated upon the surface of the sofa, Miao Yan!

"How... how could it be you?" Chen Xiaolian blurted.

A cup of tea rested before Miao Yan, who did not say anything. She silently observed Chen Xiaolian and Roddy.

The middle-aged butler gestured for the two of them to walk over and sit down. Instantly, some people came over to pour tea for them.

"I wish to speak with these two gentlemen. Please leave us alone for a moment," Miao Yan raised her head and spoke to her butler.

The middle-aged butler slowly walked out of the room. Before moving away, he lightly closed the door.

"Miao Yan?" Chen Xiaolian stared at the woman seated before him.

The enchanting face, the exquisite facial features, the familiar pair of smiling eyes and also the slender figure. Even when seated, the slender contour of her legs could not be concealed.

Even if he were beaten to death, Chen Xiaolian refused to believe that there would be someone who could look so similar in this world!

This woman before him must certainly be Miao Yan!

Or perhaps...according to the discussion they had with Lun Tai and Bei Tai back in Japan...

If Miao Yan was a Player...

Then, this woman was Miao Yan's Exclusive Account within this world!

This woman before Chen Xiaolian silently observed Chen Xiaolian. Her expression was indiscernible, one of calmness and silence. Chen Xiaolian noted that the woman's body was exuding an aura of British aristocracy. Despite her young age, her body innately possessed the special feeling of profound tranquillity and conservativeness.

The same was true of her dress.

The Miao Yan from the instance dungeon had worn a tight leather suit, one that was more enticing compared to this.

After a few seconds of silence, Miao Yan finally spoke up.

Her eyes continued to lock onto Chen Xiaolian as she did.

"I believe this is not the first time we've met."

A gentle voice and a calm tone, and an aristocratic air of coolness.

Chen Xiaolian noted that her words contained the standard accent of British people.

He thought about it and asked tentatively. "You are talking about our encounter in Tokyo, right before the elevator?"

Miao Yan – or more accurately, this woman nodded her head.

Chen Xiaolian recalled the information about this woman that Qiao Qiao had managed to obtain back then.

From what he could recall, this woman was an aristocrat of Britain, something along the lines of a Countess of the Norman family.

"I remember, back then when we met in Tokyo, you had mistaken me for someone else," The Countess slowly said. "The name you used... Miao Yan, is it not?"

When she said the words 'Miao Yan', her pronunciation of it was very strange and awkward. Clearly, this woman's pronunciation of Chinese was very stiff.

After saying that, the Countess directed her pair of smiling eyes at Chen Xiaolian. She slowly asked. "Can you tell me, who is this 'Miao Yan'?"

Chen Xiaolian did not reply.

The Countess smiled and pulled out a folded piece of paper from a small purse. Spreading open the paper on the surface of the table, she slid it forward.

It was an ordinary piece of white paper. Two words were written upon its surface.

Miao Yan.

It was written in Chinese. However, the strokes were done in a crooked manner as though the one writing them was someone who did not understand Chinese.

"This was written by me," The Countess' voice was calm, but she gave a slight frown. "My understanding of Chinese is limited. I had to specifically learn these two words."

"I do not follow your meaning," Chen Xiaolian made the decision to act conservatively just in case.

"You see, since I invited you over, it means that I sincerely want to know about something," The Countess appeared to be smiling as her eyes looked at Chen Xiaolian – her eyes appeared profound. "Truth be told, being mistaken for someone else like what you did in Tokyo – this is not the first time something like this had happened."

The Countess' eyes revealed what appeared to be frustration. "If this had only occurred once, then I may be able to dismiss it as a coincidence. However, it had happened more than once. When different people keep mistaking me as someone known as 'Miao Yan', I believe that this matter is no longer that simple, am I right?"

Chen Xiaolian kept his silence yet again.

He was gradually suspecting that his speculation was likely to be correct!

This Countess before him was most likely Miao Yan's Exclusive Account in this world – she was the exclusive NPC dedicated to Miao Yan alone.

"The fact that you are keeping mum on this only proves that you know something," The Countess gave a light sigh. "Can you tell me about it?"

"Is this issue giving you problems? Or is it simply due to curiosity?" Chen Xiaolian gestured with his head. He did not answer the question directly and instead asked her back.

"Curiosity? Problems?" The Countess pondered the question and answered. "Perhaps both."

She sighed gently. "Lately... or more accurately, since the past one year, something has been causing me distress. I... I am uncertain on how to explain this feeling."

She seemed to be trying hard to recall something before gently saying. "It is a very strange feeling. It is just like... just like, at some point in time, my memories... something peculiar would happen, a minute of..."

"Interruption?" Chen Xiaolian supplied her with the word she was looking for.

The Countess' eyes lit up. "That is right! An interruption, that word is most appropriate!"

She sat on the surface of the sofa and fidgeted a little as she changed her posture. "There were some minute changes that no one else could detect. I am the only one who could feel it."

"For example?" Chen Xiaolian looked into the woman's eyes and smiled. "I am not trying to infringe upon your privacy. If it is inconvenient, please just forget about my question."

"No, I want to find an answer from you. Besides, it appears that you

know something. This... I will tell you,” The Countess appeared distressed. She then hesitated for a moment before speaking up. “For example, sometimes, I was obviously in the middle of combing my hair while holding the comb in my hand. However, the next instant, I found that my hair had been completely combed and that I was sitting blankly in front of the mirror.”

“Some other times, I will feel thirsty. However, before I could go get a cup of water, in just an instant, I would realize that I... no longer feel thirsty. It was as if I have had my fill of water already.

“There are many, many more incidents that are similar to this.

“The one that left the deepest impression on me was one that happened last year. Back then, I was standing in the stands watching a polo competition – I actually do not like this type of sports. Thus, my mind was simply not there. However, when I came to, I found myself standing up, clapping my hands because one of the players had scored in a goal.”

The Countess’ eyes revealed confusion. “I... I do not know how to describe the specifics of what happened. There had been many more of such similar incidents since then. All of these happened since one year ago. This issue had been constantly troubling me. I had even visited a psychiatrist before, but no solution came from it. Only that I may have had too tense of a life... causing me to hallucinate.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at the Countess. “Then... this name, Miao Yan. Where did you hear it from? What I mean is, before we met, where did you hear this name?”

“It was six months ago,” The Countess quickly said. “The first time someone mistook me for Miao Yan happened in Switzerland. I was there to attend a friend’s wedding. Outside the church, a stranger mistook me for Miao Yan and left soon after. Back then, I did not think too much about it.

“The second time it happened was two months ago. I was attending an equestrian club event when a stranger came up to me. That was the second time a stranger had mistaken me for someone else. However...”

“However, what?”

“Something special happened with the second one,” The Countess tried her best to recall it and said slowly. “Back then, the other person was specifically looking for me. Hmm, it would be more accurate to say that he came to my room to look for me.”

“He went to your room to look for you?” Chen Xiaolian was stunned – this could no longer be considered as ‘mistaken for someone else’.

“In the equestrian club, the fellow took the initiative to look for me, believing me to be the one known as Miao Yan. After I told him that he had made a mistake... the man acted in a peculiar manner. He said...”

“What did he say?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

“He said: I am sorry. It seems I came at an inappropriate time. I will contact and meet up with you at the appropriate time.”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyes flickered!

Those words... clearly, the person did not make a mistake! It was obvious that the person knew that this Countess was Miao Yan’s Exclusive Account!

“That person... how does he look like?”

“A Caucasian,” The Countess pondered and answered. “He had an average looking face. However, he appeared to be a well-educated person. Oh, right, he was wearing equestrian attire. There was an insignia sewn into his harness. It was a thorned flower.”

...

—

Terrence. Raw: ‘泰伦’, pinyin: ‘tài lún’.

1 ‘Like fish in water’ means getting to befriend people who have the same wavelength as you or being in a comfortable environment.

2 Miao Yan is the High-class Player who first appeared in Chapter 65.

Chapter 176: Treatment For High-class Players

Thorned flower!

Chen Xiaolian's eyes quickly narrowed!

Thorned flower... could it be the Thorned Flower Guild?

Miao Yan... is connected to the Thorned Flower Guild!

Chen Xiaolian exchanged glances with Roddy. A cold chill secretly ran down his spine. He then asked cautiously. "Then? Did this person re-appear to contact you again?"

"No," The Countess shook her head. "Later on, which was one month ago in Tokyo, I met you. There, you mistook me for this 'Miao Yan' woman."

Chen Xiaolian frowned.

The Countess slowly reached for her cup. Taking a small sip, she observed Chen Xiaolian's eyes. "Well then, I have already answered many of your questions. For fairness sake, don't you think you should answer my questions now?"

"What do you want to ask?" Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

The Countess slowly placed down her cup. "I want to know, who exactly is this Miao Yan?"

As she was raising the question, she was also carefully observing Chen Xiaolian's expression and eyes. It appeared that she was trying to decipher something from there...

Chen Xiaolian entered a deep state of silence.

This question was a difficult one to answer!

After sorting out the mess and considering the right words to say, Chen Xiaolian answered. "She is a friend of mine. We had once experienced some stuff together."

The Countess' eyes revealed traces of curiosity. Her tone became more peculiar as she continued asking. "Ah... you mean to say, she is your girlfriend?"

Girlfriend?!

"Of course not!" Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly. "That is not what I meant."

The Countess's eyes turned cold and she appeared dissatisfied. "Mister, I am not trying to invade your privacy. As a real aristocrat, I am not interested in infringing upon the private lives of others," Pausing, she continued with a solemn tone. "However, this matter is now somehow related to me. Thus, I have to inquire about it."

"I can only say, Miao Yan and I are not in that kind of relationship," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "More accurately, we could be considered as temporary partners. We had helped each other before to accomplish a certain matter."

"Partners... you mean the both of you engaged in a business transaction together?"

"You may consider it as a business transaction, but you may also consider it as not one," Chen Xiaolian smiled. "It would be more accurate to say that I still owe her a favour."

The Countess deliberately formed a smile on her face. She said coolly. "I have reason to believe that you should have quite the deep level of connection with her. Otherwise, you would not have appeared so excited to see me back in Tokyo. Additionally... you actually came all the way to London to find me."

"I'm afraid you are mistaken," Chen Xiaolian quickly interrupted her. "I did not come here to find you. This encounter is simply a coincidence."

"Oh?" The Countess laughed. "Then, you really came to find those two Asian girls? Ah, my butler informed me that you even attempted to bribe the staff members here with money. That was not an upright thing to do."

Chen Xiaolian thought as he observed the tranquil look on the

Countess' face. He thought to himself: This woman is not as simple as her appearance would lead us to believe! Her true thoughts might be at a far deeper level!

She clearly knew what he and Roddy were doing here. Yet she deliberately said something else to mislead them.

"If you are looking for someone, I may be able to render some assistance," The Countess spoke in a calm voice as she seated herself steadily. "Naturally, this assistance is not for free. We will make an exchange. I wish to know more about this Miao Yan."

Chen Xiaolian considered her proposal.

"I noticed something. Back then, when I was talking about the part where my memories were 'interrupted', I saw that the way you reacted," The Countess slowly said. "I noticed that you appear surprised."

"Naturally, this is originally an unusual occurrence in and of itself. What's wrong with showing a surprised expression?" Chen Xiaolian smiled.

"Of course something is wrong!" The Countess narrowed her eyes – when she narrowed her eyes, her pair of smiling eyes formed two curves and came to resemble two crescent moons. However, what she said next caused Chen Xiaolian to become surprised.

"The expression of surprise on your face was not those that conveyed the words 'to think something like this could actually happen'. It was more of an 'as expected' look," The Countess said coolly. "Do not attempt to deceive me. I am a bridge game expert. Inspecting the subtle changes in my opponent's face is something I am very good at."

Pausing, she then stared directly at Chen Xiaolian's eyes. "In other words, compared to normal people, you have a different view and reaction toward the interruptions memories that I am suffering from. Your reaction appeared to indicate: This situation is something that is consistent with what you had expected. Additionally, it would appear that you know more about it."

This woman is very clever!

Chen Xiaolian warned himself inwardly.

It had to be said, Miao Yan had given herself a very good Exclusive Account. This Exclusive Account was born an aristocrat with a beautiful appearance and a brilliant mind.

A pity... no matter how outstanding she may be, she was only an Exclusive Account.

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Did my guess hit the mark? Or are you hesitating on whether to cooperate with me or not?” The Countess smiled softly. “I forgot to tell you this. If you really want to look for someone here, I can probably assist you in a huge way. In this place, if you want to find information, bribery would not be able to help you achieve your objective. For me, on the other hand, finding information is very easy... you see, from a certain perspective, our current location can be considered as something that belongs to me.”

Roddy and Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the Countess at the same time.

The Countess’ face expressed a certain modesty. However, a trace of aristocratic pride seeped out from her eyes. “Naturally, I do not fully own this place, just a portion of its shares – a very huge portion. This portion gives me sufficient authority and voice to help you out.”

The way this woman was speaking exhibited the sense of emphasis seen in those traditional aristocrats. However, her conditions were very enticing for Chen Xiaolian.

Finding Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo was the most important thing to do!

As for this Countess... her other identity was Miao Yan. As for Chen Xiaolian, after having speculated that Miao Yan was a Player, he actually did not want to approach this person... after all; his position and that of Players were natural opposites.

At present however, they had a more important matter at hand.

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He retrieved his mobile phone and selected the picture with Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo before placing it on the surface of the table.

“I am looking for these two. From what I was able to gather, these two are most likely within this club,” Chen Xiaolian said. “If you can help me with this...”

The Countess did not hesitate at all. She gently picked up a bell from the side of the table and rang it. Then, the door of the lounge opened and the middle-aged butler made a dashing bow as he stood by the door. “Mistress, how may I assist you?”

“Stewart, go check and see if our club have been playing host to some Asian guests, two of which are two young girls. Once you get their information, come inform me about it at once.”

Chen Xiaolian watched as the butler known as Stewart bowed before making his exit. Chen Xiaolian then turned around to face the Countess.

This woman was no ordinary woman. Additionally, she had quite the way of doing things. Although she wanted information from him, she did not use this matter to force that information out of him. Instead, she had ordered her men to go inquire information about the matter first.

From this point, it could be seen that she possessed the bearing of one who could accomplish great things.

If she had said things like “If you do not tell me what I want to know, then I will not help you find those two”, then that would have meant that she was a petty person.

“Please help yourselves to some tea,” The Countess smiled softly. “We still have quite some time, don’t we? Ah, you are from the east. Perhaps you are not accustomed to red Ceylon tea. If there is a need, I can get them to bring over two cups of green tea.”

“No need to go to such troubles,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

Roddy looked at the Countess and asked. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Of course.”

“What I want to ask is about... you are a Chinese. However, you are also a British aristocrat.”

“A Countess. Countess Norman,” The Countess smiled gently. “Oh, I do not mind being asked this question at all. Truth be told, this is a question I always get from people in social gatherings. I am quite used to it.”

Pausing, she slowly continued. “I do indeed have Oriental blood flowing in me. My great-grandfather was once a high-ranking official of the Great Britain who served in the Far East. He served in both India and East Asia. During WWII, he had also gone over to your country before as a military adviser. There, he had cooperated with a general of your country to resist the Japanese together. Unfortunately, the general ended up being killed in action. Due to the great friendship formed between my great-grandfather and the general during the course of the war, my great-grandfather adopted both the boy and girl of the general and brought them both back with him when he returned to England.

“My great-grandfather did not have heirs of his own. Thus, the boy and girl of the Chinese general became his heirs. The boy came to inherit my great-grandfather’s family business and position. That boy was my grandfather. In the 1960s, my grandfather then married an international student who came from Yuwan Bay. They gave birth to my father who married someone who went to Cambridge University together with him. That someone was an England born woman and my mother.

“Thus, half the blood flowing through my body shares the same origin with you two.”

“A story full of twists and turns, but also a very touching one,” Chen Xiaolian said softly. “However, appearance wise, you look more like a Chinese.”

The story was indeed filled with twists and turns and was very touching. However, Chen Xiaolian was visited by a peculiar feeling.

He felt: The damned Development Team sure did put in quite the effort

when they were creating this high-class Exclusive Account for the High-class Player, Miao Yan!

They made such a tortuous and complicated character setting!

That is right, it's the character's setting! They actually made up such an elaborate and complicated setting for this character.

This is what you call treatment for High-class Players...

Chapter 177: Punishing The Weak

As they were conversing, the Countess did not probe further for information regarding 'Miao Yan'.

She possessed a very lofty bearing.

Soon, the middle-aged butler known as Stewart returned with news.

However, the news was not a good one!

According to the middle-aged butler, the club did indeed played host to a few Asian guests. Among them were two Asian girls. Appearance wise, those two were most likely Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo.

Regrettably... the group of Asian guests had already left.

They left at around noon the day after Chen Xiaolian had received the call from Soo Soo.

"Is it possible to find out where they went?" Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

"My apologies," The middle-aged butler said slowly. "Those guests did not let the club arrange their travel route. They also did not request us to book any flight or train tickets – it is possible that they had already made the necessary arrangements beforehand. Thus, we are unable to determine their whereabouts."

Roddy sighed while Chen Xiaolian's face turned ugly to behold.

Considering how long it had been since they left... and the present level of technological development, they could have already gone to any corner of the world.

"There may still be a way," The Countess said softly. "I believe these Asian guests must not be the members of this club. In other words, they were only able to stay here because they are friends with one of the members of this club. Thus..."

The Countess smiled lightly. She turned to look at the middle-aged butler.

The middle-aged butler quickly said. "According to the records, the Asian guests were brought in by Sir Pattinson as his guests."

"Sir Pattinson?" The Countess smiled. She turned back to Chen Xiaolian. "What a coincidence. Sir Pattinson and I happen to be friends in an equestrian club. I can help you ask him about it. Perhaps this Sir Pattinson will know of something. However..."

She turned to look at a vintage pendulum clock and said. "I will not be able to get to him in time today. Tomorrow, then. Tomorrow, I will convey the information acquired to you."

Chen Xiaolian was well aware that she was simply making an excuse. However, there was nothing he could say against her actions – if she really wanted to find the information, a phone call would solve the issue.

Clearly, this Countess was planning something else.

Chen Xiaolian sighed inwardly.

It appeared this will have to do for now.

"If you two do not mind, you can stay here for today. This place will provide you with the best in quality, service and enjoyment," The middle-aged butler gave a faint smile. He then turned toward Chen Xiaolian. "I heard that there is a car parked outside by the street. Those two friends inside the car may come stay here as well."

Chen Xiaolian was not shocked to hear that. Considering the fact that they were within their grounds, Lun Tai and Bei Tai being noticed was not something to be surprised about.

"There is no need for that."

Chen Xiaolian quickly stood up. "We have our own accommodations. So then... tomorrow?"

He turned his head to look at the Countess. "Tomorrow..."

"Tomorrow, once I obtain the information, I will get Stewart to contact you two. Can you please leave behind a way to contact you?" The Countess said coolly. "Tomorrow, I will get Stewart to fetch you over."

Then, we will talk things over.”

“Ok.”

Chen Xiaolian quickly got up and left together with Roddy.

Of course he would not accept her invitation to stay there... this Countess was an inscrutable character and it was hard to tell if she was a friend or enemy. Furthermore... it was unknown what type of relationship there was between her and Thorned Flower Guild.

It was only natural that Chen Xiaolian would turn down her offer to stay within a place where she held influence over!

If he were to choose to stay there, he would have to worry about their conversations getting tapped!

Stewart the butler escorted the two of them out of the club.

Under his watchful eyes, both Chen Xiaolian and Roddy walked to the car parked by the side of the street. They then got into the car and sped off.

“How was it?” Lun Tai asked as he was driving.

Chen Xiaolian and Roddy recounted what happened to them inside. Lun Tai and Bei Tai were both shocked.

“Miao Yan? No. You mean... Miao Yan’s Exclusive Account?” Lun Tai’s face expressed a trace of astonishment. “In other words... Miao Yan could really be a Player!”

“In my opinion, the possibility of that is very high,” Chen Xiaolian said in a heavy tone. “In addition, it seems that she and Thorned Flower Guild – what I mean to say is, there might be a certain relationship between Miao Yan and Thorned Flower Guild.”

Within the car, all four of them fell silent.

“The Countess must have kept some things hidden from us,” Roddy said slowly.

“Naturally, for some of the matters, she must be either lying or holding

back,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “However, that is a very normal occurrence.”

After what had happened in the Tokyo instance dungeon, or perhaps, more accurately, after their encounter with Tian Lie, the four of them were highly cautious toward Thorned Flower Guild!

...

At the London Heathrow International Airport...

An international plane was resting on the airfield and luggage cases of various sizes were being moved down using conveyor belts.

It was night and the workers were anxiously doing their job. One trolley after another moved about as they transported the luggage.

A faint silvery liquid slowly flowed out from one of the luggage cases and went unnoticed amid the darkness of the night.

The silver coloured liquid slowly flowed into a drainage opening and disappeared.

Shortly after, some distance away from the airport where there was a drainage opening, Tian Lie... or more accurately, Da Gang's figure slowly emerged out from the silver coloured liquid. He stepped forward.

Standing beneath the night sky, Da Gang began stretching his body.

“Sigh... a long journey really is bothersome. Should I contact the fellows from the guild... hmm, forget it. They probably think I am dead.”

After saying that, Da Gang's figure began to wriggle. His body quickly transformed into a young, ordinary looking Caucasian and he swaggered along under the night sky.

...

“It is now 8 o'clock.”

After returning to their hotel room, the four of them sat down to discuss the matter. Chen Xiaolian looked at the time. “There is still 2 more hours to go. At around 10 o'clock, the system will issue out the information

related to the instance dungeon over.”

Roddy grumbled. “Sigh... it’s so fast. I have yet to fully enjoy the one month of tranquillity.”

“Trust me, this feeling... you’ll get used to it,” Lun Tai smiled.

“Do you two veterans have any opinions about this instance dungeon?” Chen Xiaolian looked at Lun Tai and Bei Tai.

“Let’s not talk about the distribution for individuals. We are a guild, so we’ll be discussing about the procedures involved for guilds,” Lun Tai said slowly. “You should know this; the distribution of instance dungeons is related to the guild’s class.”

Roddy nodded his head. “We know that.”

“At present, the biggest question is what our Meteor Rock Guild’s class is.”

A guild’s class was dependent on the estimated strength of the guild’s members, the guild’s rate of success when participating in instance dungeons, the guild’s rate of survival, the completion of quests. Those and the likes would be put together to form a comprehensive evaluation.

Theoretically speaking, a guild that possessed more experts, a higher rate of success and a higher number of participation in instance dungeons would find itself at a higher class.

The system’s evaluation toward the current Meteor Rock Guild was... [B+].

This class was not too high.

Moreover, Chen Xiaolian believed that the reason the guild would be able to acquire this class was due to what happened in the Japan, the Tokyo instance dungeon. There, they had accomplished a perfect completion of quests by completing both the given quests. That gave them an outstanding level of achievements, which contributed in bolstering their guild’s class.

If the appraisal for their guild’s class were purely through the

calculation of their guild's strength, the resulting class would likely be much lower!

“The past battle records that Meteor Rock Guild had should be quite good. At the very least, while Qiu Yun was still around, the Meteor Rock Guild was quite famous. Unfortunately...” Lun Tai said slowly. “During Qiu Yun's time here, the Meteor Rock Guild also took several heavy hits in succession and suffered from heavy casualties. Some of them left the guild as well... their evaluation should have plummeted considerably since. Additionally, our present members were all added in later on. Not a single one of us are old hands from Qiu Yun's time. The number of times Bei Tai and I have participated in instance dungeons is not small. However, the number of instance dungeon participation and battle records that you, the Guild Leader and the others have is quite small.

“When the system calculates the comprehensive evaluation of a guild, it does not only consider the historical battle records of the guild, it also evaluates the existing guild members individual battle records – in my opinion, the system's method of evaluation is very thorough. It will be difficult to drill loopholes through it.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

It was not simply their battle records.

Judging by the strength of their guild, to be able to acquire a [B+] class evaluation was already quite the feat.

It had to be said, at the moment, their guild only had seven members.

One of them, Xia Xiaolei was a support type with limited battle strength.

Having a low guild class would result in a disadvantage.

For example, the right to be exempted from an instance dungeon!

The rules of the system stated that guilds have the right to be exempted from instance dungeons.

However, there were two restrictions placed on this exemption right.

First, the exemption right cannot be used successively. In other words, after using it, the guild will be forced to participate in the next instance dungeon! Additionally, the use of the exemption right would cause the guild's class to fall.

The second one was more particular. The exemption right could only be utilized against an instance dungeon of an equivalent or lower class compared to the guild!

In other words, if the current Meteor Rock Guild with its [B+] class were to encounter a [B+] class instance dungeon or [B-] class, or [C] class, they could utilize the exemption right to be exempted from those instance dungeons.

However, if they were to encounter an [A] class instance dungeon, they would be unable to utilize the exemption right!

The exemption right was something that could be used to save one's life at crucial moments!

...

"I am currently most worried about one thing," Chen Xiaolian looked at his three members. "When our guild is selected to participate in the instance dungeon, we have a choice in the number of participants. Our guild currently has seven members. Assuming the incoming instance dungeon require us to field only three or four members, that that would be fine... even if we have yet to find Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo, we can be the ones to participate in the instance dungeon.

"However, in the event that... six members are needed, or perhaps a full participation is needed...

"We are unable to find Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo. If so, according to the rules of the system, those who do not enter the instance dungeon before it opens will be punished by the system..."

"The probability of that happening is relatively small," Lun Tai considered the matter and said. "If we encounter one with the equivalent class as ours or lower, we can try to utilize the exemption right to

circumvent this time's crisis. If we encounter one with a class higher than ours, then... actually, when it comes to high-class instance dungeons, the system will consider the class of a guild and the differences therein, and thus place a restriction on the number of guild members allowed in for low-class guilds.

“Theoretically speaking, if a guild's class is lower than an instance dungeon's class, the system will reduce the number of members allowed in the instance dungeon. This is a form of punishment.

“Simply put, many of the older Awakened ones believe that the system's utmost objective is to punish the weak.

“It could be likened to having a whip lashing out upon you, forcing you to continuously become more powerful.

“In other words, we are currently a [B+] class guild. If an [A] class instance dungeon were to select us to participate in it, it is highly likely... the number of members required by the system for the instance dungeon would most likely be less than the total number of members our guild has.”

“Isn't that the equivalent of committing suicide?” Roddy blurted out. Looking around at the others, he continued. “What I mean is... the guild is already one class weaker compared to the instance dungeon! If the guild is not allowed to field all their members, then they would definitely not be able to unleash their full strength...”

“That is why it is called ‘punishing the weak’. If you are weak, then you deserve to die... that is the core characteristic of the damned system,” Bei Tai cursed out vehemently.

Chen Xiaolian frowned. “However... what about the incident with the Tokyo instance dungeon? All of us had participated in it. There was no restriction... although we were only sucked into it by accident by being within the instance dungeon area...

“However, the Tokyo instance dungeon's class was clearly higher than our guild's class.

“Furthermore... if this is a loophole, doesn't it mean that other low-class guilds could use this loophole to bring their own members into the instance dungeon when faced against high-class instance dungeons? That would give them the ability to unleash their full power.”

“There is only one explanation. The Tokyo instance dungeon is a large-scale instance dungeon,” Lun Tai said slowly.

Large-scale instance dungeon.

Chen Xiaolian silently nodded his head.

He had studied up on the rules for guilds before.

Large-scale instance dungeons were a special existence within the system.

Large-scale instance dungeons cared not for the difference in a guild's class. Thus, that restriction was not applicable. Simply put, it was a chaotic battlefield.

Naturally, the system was very tyrannical here.

In large-scale instance dungeons, those that were not selected could still choose to participate, but those that were selected must participate nonetheless.

“The reward for completing large-scale instance dungeons is very high; the marks acquired for our battle records will also be very high. That is why our guild was able to obtain a [B+] class evaluation,” Lun Tai smiled. “However... large-scale instance dungeons have always been a terrifying existence. All I can say is that we were very lucky to be able to survive and complete the instance dungeon.”

“Because, back then, we had Nicole with us. Nicole's presence helped us a great deal,” Roddy suddenly whispered out.

The others fell silent.

Recalling back to what happened in the Tokyo instance dungeon, that was indeed the case.

Thorned Flower's team and the several Thunderstorm Tanks were all

decimated by Nicole.

In the end, Nicole had also contributed a great deal toward killing off Tian Lie.

If not for Nicole, Meteor Rock Guild would have been utterly annihilated the moment they encountered the Thunderstorm Tanks.

Seeing how sombre the mood had become, Chen Xiaolian sighed. “All right, let’s not talk about those things first. Soon, the details regarding the instance dungeon will be issued out. We’ll continue our discussion after that.”

They then got something to eat. However, they did not leave. Instead, they stayed together as they waited for the time to reach 10 o’clock.

It was almost similar to the wait for Judgement Day to arrive.

Finally, when the time finally reached 10 o’clock...

[System prompt: Meteor Rock Guild has been selected to participate in an instance dungeon. Instance dungeon details have been issued, please check.]

—

Pattinson. Raw: ‘帕丁森’, pinyin: ‘pà dīng sēn’.

Chapter 178: Long Live

[System prompt: Instance dungeon number D066. Meteor Rock Guild has been selected to participate in this instance dungeon. Information for this instance dungeon is as follows:

[A. Within 48 hours, please make your way to the designated location for this instance dungeon, located within the world of Europe, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the capital of the kingdom, Greater London area

[1]

. Selected guilds who fail to arrive at the designated location will receive system punishment. Selected solo participants who fail to arrive will be exterminated.

[B. This instance dungeon is a Historical Type, [A-] class instance dungeon. Restrictions will be placed on technological skills and equipment. Please decide the list of participants based on the specifications of the instance dungeon.

[C. The quests for this instance dungeon will be issued in phases. After the instance dungeon is opened, the first phase of the quest will be issued.

[System prompt: According to the comprehensive evaluation on Meteor Rock Guild's class, the number of participants allowed for this instance dungeon is: 3 (lower limit) to 5 (upper limit).]

...

That was the instance dungeon details given by the system.

This information was not complete. After all, the specifics of the first phase of the quest will only be issued after the instance dungeon officially opened.

However, there were some important clues among the information given.

“Three to five,” Roddy frowned. “At least three, at most five. This is the restriction placed on the number of participants.”

“Historical Type instance dungeon, [A-] class. Considering that this is a historical type of instance dungeon, we will need find information regarding the history of London, no, the history of Britain,” Lun Tai spoke up.

“Technological abilities are restricted. This may prove to be disadvantageous for Roddy. It is likely that it will not allow the usage of the Mech for battles,” Chen Xiaolian looked at Roddy.

“The instance dungeon turned out to be in London... is this a coincidence? Or did the system issue out the instance dungeon by looking at where we are?” Bei Tai made a face.

“Enough,” Chen Xiaolian said in a grim voice. “Let’s calm down. First, we need to calm down and consider the situation before coming up with a plan.”

The other three guild members turned to look at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian pondered about it for a few minutes and rechecked the information issued by the system. Then, he kneaded his forehead.

“First, we need to get in touch with the Countess tomorrow and see if we can get some information on Qiao Qiao’s whereabouts. Depending on the results of this meeting tomorrow, we’ll make further considerations. If we cannot find them within 48 hours, we will have to temporarily give up on our current rescue operation. We will prioritize the completion of this instance dungeon!”

The others nodded their heads, giving rise to no objections toward this decision.

“Judging from the present information available regarding this instance dungeon, we know that this instance dungeon restricts technological skills and equipment. In other words, Roddy, it is highly likely that you will not be able to do much in this instance dungeon,” Chen Xiaolian looked at Roddy. “Thus... when we participate in this instance dungeon,

you will have to sit this one out.”

“Err...” Roddy hesitated momentarily, seemingly wanting to say something. However, after hesitating for a while, he nodded his head.

This was not the time to act impulsively. Roddy was clear that since the instance dungeon placed a restriction on technological skills, he would really be unable to provide much in terms of assistance. If he were to recklessly participate out of emotions of solidarity, then he would likely end up becoming a burden to them.

This was not the time to be emotional.

“Regarding the present participants for this instance dungeon, as the Guild Leader, I will have to participate,” Chen Xiaolian said. “Xia Xiaolei is still back in China. It would not be appropriate to ask him to come over now. Additionally, with his abilities, he would not be able to help much. Thus... Lun Tai, Bei Tai...”

“Understood,” Lun Tai gave a light smile and looked at his brother. “We have no objections.”

Bei Tai nodded. “No objections.”

“Then, this will be our decision for now,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “The preliminary members selected for this time’s instance dungeon are me, Lun Tai and Bei Tai. If... before the instance dungeon opens, if we can find Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo, then we may reconsider and change the member selection.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian raised his eyebrows. “From now onward, we will be looking for information. Since the system said that this is a Historical Type instance dungeon, we will now begin searching for all historical information related to Britain. Roddy, how is your world history?”

“I’m a crappy student,” Roddy spread out both his arms. “I’ll have you know, I can’t even remember the ancient history of our own country.”

“Then, we’ll have to start cramming ourselves with information. At least it will be better than not knowing anything. Help us find the

necessary information by looking through the internet,” Chen Xiaolian turned to Lun Tai and Bei Tai. “Another thing, the designated location is London. Since that is the case, I feel that we will need to make some time to inspect the areas of London City, especially those buildings with some history. We will need to take note of them. Lun Tai, I will need a copy of a map of London. It will be for the best if the historical buildings are marked.”

Lun Tai nodded his head. “I can start the car and go check the area. Two days should be enough for me to cover London City.”

“Bei Tai, we will need weapons,” Chen Xiaolian turned to Bei Tai. “You have some ‘friends’ here, right? Try to see if you can get your hands on some weapons.”

“I understand, leave it to me.”

As the Guild Leader, Chen Xiaolian’s distribution of tasks was accepted by everyone.

That night, Chen Xiaolian too did not sleep. He stayed up all night checking up on much of the history of Britain and London.

It was unrealistic to fully digest all the history of this long, glorious and infallible empire. However, it was not too impossible to memorize those big events that happened throughout history.

The Countess had said that she would send someone over to contact Chen Xiaolian. However, even after night had fallen on the next day, Chen Xiaolian never received any contact from the Countess.

This matter caused Chen Xiaolian to feel baffled.

Thankfully, Roddy, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were still meticulously making preparations for the instance dungeon despite their anxiousness.

Lun Tai drove out for the whole day to check out the various spots throughout London. As for Bei Tai, he made contact with his ‘friends’ and obtained some weapons. There were also some equipment that may be of use. For example, medicinal substances, first aid kit, etc.

After waiting anxiously for the whole day...

Inside the room, the phone rang out in the middle of the night.

Chen Xiaolian went over to pick up the phone and heard a polite voice speaking over the phone.

“Dear Sir, I am sorry for disturbing you at such a late hour...”

Chen Xiaolian was able to identify the voice. It belonged to Stewart, the middle-aged butler.

“There must be a special reason for you to be calling me at such a late hour. Hopefully, I will not be disappointed,” Chen Xiaolian smiled.

“The thing is, my employer wanted me to inform you. It is regarding the matter that you asked her for, some information has been found. If it is not inconvenient, my employer invites you to come over for a discussion.”

“... ..now?” Chen Xiaolian checked the time and saw that it was almost 12 o'clock.

There was less than 24 hours before the instance dungeon opened.

“You mean... to meet up now? It is currently in the middle of the night,” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“I am sorry. I am aware that this may seem rude. However, this is what my employer had requested. Thus...”

“Then, now it is!” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and interrupted Stewart's words. “Where should we meet? I will head over immediately.”

“There is no need to trouble yourself with that. I have already sent a car over. In 5 minutes time, it will be waiting for you at the entrance to your hotel.”

“Five minutes? All right, no problem.”

“There is another matter that my employer had requested,” Stewart said slowly.

“What is it?”

“My employer wishes for you to come alone. I ask that you understand.”

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a bit. Then, he took a deep breath and answered. “All right, I understand. It’s decided, then.”

“Thank you for your understanding.”

Stewart politely hung up the phone.

Chen Xiaolian rubbed his nose and frowned.

These aristocrats... the way they do things sure are strange.

After he told Roddy and the two brothers, they all expressed varying degrees of objections. Their main objection came from the request to go alone. It was too strange.

“Who knows, there might be a conspiracy here,” Lun Tai shook his head. “It’s too dangerous... besides, that woman might very well be the Exclusive Account of a High-class Player... the instance dungeon is also going to open soon. If you split up with your team members for too long... when the instance dungeon opens, there will be huge problems.”

“I know that,” Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth. “However, the woman might have obtained some information. Thus, I need to go.”

He thought about it and continued. “Don’t worry, I will come back as soon as possible. Additionally... I don’t think the woman can threaten me. Do not forget, even if she is an Exclusive Account, as long as Miao Yan does not ‘arrive’, she remains an ordinary person. Moreover... I’ve heard before. When we are not participating within an instance dungeon, Awakened ones are not allowed to utilize powers above [B] class. If there is any danger from them, I will still be able to make a run for it.”

Most importantly, Chen Xiaolian believed that... Miao Yan, she probably will not harm him.

Although she was just Miao Yan’s Exclusive Account, she was still an ordinary person, right?

...

After the 5 minutes was over, Chen Xiaolian went downstairs to the hotel lobby. There, he saw a black coloured car parked outside the hotel.

The chauffeur stood by the car and bowed toward Chen Xiaolian before opening the car door.

Without saying anything, Chen Xiaolian got into the car.

Under the night sky, the car moved at a steady pace through the city of London.

Chen Xiaolian did not speak with the chauffeur. It was apparent that this chauffeur was an ordinary person and Chen Xiaolian was not in the mood for polite banter.

Just as Chen Xiaolian was about to run out of patience, the car arrived before a building. The building was brimming with a classical British style.

After the courtyard doors were opened, the car drove around a fountain and then finally came to a stop before the entrance of the building.

Chen Xiaolian got off the car and saw Stewart standing before the entrance. Stewart executed a slight bow toward him.

Without saying anything, this middle-age butler turned around and gestured for Chen Xiaolian to enter the building. After they arrived before the huge door of a lounge, the middle-aged butler lightly knocked on the door three times. Then, he turned to Chen Xiaolian and said. "You may enter."

After saying that, Stewart turned around and left.

Chen Xiaolian regarded the door before him. With a frown on his face and a vigilant mind, he placed one hand on the door handle, took a deep breath and pushed open the door. Then, he entered...

Within the lounge, there was a long table. Upon the surface of the table were candlesticks, red wine and some dishes.

A figure was seated on one side of the table. The figure observed Chen Xiaolian as he walked in and used a white napkin to wipe her mouth.

Chen Xiaolian stood by the door. He halted his steps and looked at the other party. His eyes narrowed conspicuously before revealing a

complicated expression.

He sighed. "It's you?"

...

Night...

A group of men walked out from Heathrow International Airport. Subsequently, they got into a black coloured MPV.

Sitting in the second row was a man wearing black coloured trench coat. His features appeared ordinary, but his eyes shone brightly and his gaze was profound! His partially grey hair was especially eye-catching and it gave his ordinary appearance a special elegance.

Excluding the chauffeur, there was a total of four person in the MPV.

"We still have 24 hours," A man with squinted eyes, perpetually sleepy face and a slightly overweight body said after checking his watch. He was seated beside the man with grey hair. "We don't have much time left, Guild Leader."

"Don't call me Guild Leader," The grey-haired man smiled softly. He turned around to look at his companion. "I've said this many times, I do not like being called that, Lei Hu."

"Very well, Mr. Culkin [2]," Lei Hu answered. "We only have 24 hours left."

Culkin replied coolly. "Historical Type, [A-] class instance dungeon. This difficulty is not low. However...instance dungeons will always observe certain rules."

Pausing, Culkin turned his head and glanced at a skinny man who was seated in the last row. "Sasha, I need you to hack into the surveillance system of the London Municipal Administration and the police. I need to be able to grasp onto the overall situation within the shortest amount of time possible. When we are participating in the instance dungeon... you will be our eyes!"

"No problem, Mr. Culkin," The thin Sasha licked his lips and his small

eyes flashed with a glowing light.

“Don’t worry, Sasha. After the instance dungeon is over, I will let you have a taste of those girls from UK,” Culkin laughed. “As for you, Jean.”

“I’m listening,” Beside Sasha was a tall Caucasian with a bulbous nose. His face and nose was that of a typical Frenchman.

“Jean, you are in charge of cars. We need several cars that can run fast and take hits. Fill them all up with gas!”

“Relax, I will take care of that matter.”

Culkin’s finger tapped the armrest on his seat. “Historical Type... Historical Type...” A glint suddenly flashed across his eyes. “Lei Hu, what are the old buildings with history in London?” He asked.

Lei Hu reflected upon the question and let out a bitter laugh. “There are a considerable number of those: Westminster Cathedral, Tower of London... naturally, the most famous of all is the Buckingham Palace.”

“Sasha!” Culkin was quick to speak up. “After you hack into the surveillance system of the police, focus on monitoring the surrounding areas of some famous historical sites! I will get Lei Hu to make a list for you once he finished checking it over!”

After saying that, Culkin retrieved a cigar from his pocket and took in its scent before revealing a faint smile. “Gentlemen, it is time to focus. We will obtain brilliant results. Perhaps... this time tomorrow, I will bring all of you to Buckingham Palace. There we will celebrate our victory with champagne!”

Lei Hu and the others laughed out. Together, they spoke out in a low tone.

“Long live the Winter Rock Guild!”

—

Lei Hu. Raw: ‘雷狐’, pinyin: ‘léi hú’. ‘léi’ (雷) means thunder, ‘hú’ (狐) means fox.

Sasha. Raw: ‘萨沙’, pinyin: ‘sà shā’.

Jean. Raw: ‘让’, pinyin ‘ràng’. I know the pinyin looks different, but his name is pronounced njan, or something to that effect.

1 The designated location is the Greater London area.

2 Culkin was first introduced in Chapter 134.

Chapter 179: I Want To Know

“It’s you?”

Chen Xiaolian walked into the room and proceeded to walk by the long and gorgeous dining table.

The figure seated at the end of the table had a slender and elegant body with long black hair tied into a bun in the style of a noble lady.

Unexpectedly, a gold coloured pearl hairpin, which exuded an Eastern atmosphere, was inserted into her hair.

She was dressed in a beautiful red coloured evening dress, strapless style, which exposed her bare white shoulders, and had a very low chest neckline. The resulting gully was one full of temptation and charm.

Red lipstick had been applied upon her lips and her hand held onto a glass of red wine while she twirled it gently. Her other hand was holding onto a dining knife. The blade of the knife was resting on the surface of the table while her fingers lightly stroked the handle of the knife.

Those tempting and entrancing eyes appeared to be staring at Chen Xiaolian. At the same time, they appeared to be shrouded within a faint layer of mist.

Just by taking a glance at her was enough for Chen Xiaolian to make a deduction. Although they looked the same, this woman who was seated before him at this moment was certainly not the old-fashioned and sharp Countess that he had met yesterday!

Instead, she was...

Miao Yan!

“You do not appear surprised at all.”

Miao Yan pursed her lips to the side before sipping a particular mouthful of the red wine. “How boring. I thought that this would end up scaring you.”

“In that case, let’s do this once again. Should I go out the door and re-

enter? Then, pretend to be shocked?”

Chen Xiaolian then smiled and walked over. Reaching a spot that was not too distant from Miao Yan; he pulled out a chair and sat himself down. Looking at the glasses and the decanter filled with red wine placed on the table, he helped himself by pouring a glass for himself. “This seems to be good.”

“An ‘85 Latour. It is definitely worth tasting,” Miao Yan smiled softly.

Chen Xiaolian considered before replying. “For red wine, I have only heard about Lafite.”

Miao Yan appeared to be smiling. She directed a peculiar gaze at Chen Xiaolian and said. “Using the words that you people from this world use... you really are a country bumpkin.”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyebrows were raised and he gulped down the entire glass of red wine. After placing down the glass, he looked at Miao Yan silently, not uttering a single word.

“I believe you must have figured out my true identity,” Miao Yan sighed.

“Honestly, it was truly quite surprising,” Chen Xiaolian furrowed his eyebrows and rubbed his nose. “However, back when we were in the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon, I did have my suspicions as well.”

“Oh?”

“En, considering your age, you are too ignorant toward the history of the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang,” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “If you were a foreigner, then it would not be surprising. However, your appearance... you are clearly a Chinese.”

“I did not expect such a coincidence to happen. To think that you would end up finding me in London,” Miao Yan shrugged her shoulders and drank another small mouthful of red wine. Both her cheeks turned red and she licked her rosy lips. Then, she turned back to Chen Xiaolian. “You know. I really like this identity.”

“You mean, this Exclusive Account?”

“... ..” Miao Yan sighed. “That title is just a term given to it. No matter what, I do quite like this identity. A Countess, born into nobility with an astounding amount of wealth and beauty, and able to enjoy all forms of enjoyment that this world has to provide. What reason is there not to?”

Chen Xiaolian silently regarded Miao Yan. He hesitated for a moment before speaking up. “I have always been very curious... your world, just what does it look like?”

“Oh?”

“What I mean is... from your point of view, be it me or the Countess or this world, all of it are things that your world created... a game, a virtual world. As for you, you possess a High-class Player’s Exclusive Account. I guess that you must be a big spender in this game, a VIP user. The you in your world must be a very wealthy person, right?”

“Ha ha ha ha...” Miao Yan laughed. Her smiling eyes were squinted as she looked at Chen Xiaolian. “Interesting, please continue.”

“If that is the case, then the you in your world must be one with quite the status, then... all this...” He gestured toward the red wine before him, the exquisite dishes, the gorgeous dining table and the opulent room. “All of this should count for nothing.”

“You want to know how our world looks like? Are you sure you want to know? Are you absolutely sure?” Miao Yan suddenly directed a stare at Chen Xiaolian. There was a very peculiar expression upon her face.

The atmosphere immediately became tense!

Chen Xiaolian stared at Miao Yan, at her rosy lips and then into her eyes. He took a deep breath and said. “... I want to know!”

...

Da Gang casually placed his hands into his pockets as he strolled through the streets of London. Standing by the north side of Russell

Square, he observed the cathedral that stood before him. It was brimming with an atmosphere of ancientness.

At present, Da Gang was sporting brown coloured hair and he wore a wool suit. Two little moustache grew out above his mouth. His one hand held onto a bottle of wine while the other held onto a cigarette.

Not far away from Da Gang, a black coloured MPV came to a halt. A tall Frenchman with a standard bulbous nose emerged from the MPV.

“Jean, get those cars as soon as possible. We will meet up again during the day.”

“Don’t worry, Lei Hu,” Jean eased a set of earphone onto his ears and he walked toward the side of the street.

After the MPV moved away, Jean walked around and his eyes swept through the area. Spotting Da Gang who was not far away, he ignored him after a glance. He could smell the scent of alcohol on Da Gang from far away and he moved further away.

His objective was a car parked not far away. It was a durable looking Land Rover.

Jean walked forward slowly with a relaxed expression on his face.

After reaching the side of the car, he walked in a circle around the car before stopping before the driver’s seat.

“I hate cars from UK, driver on the right,” Jean grumbled. Tinkering with the door of the car for a moment, he then pulled open the door.

As he was about to enter the car, he abruptly turned around, his expression turning tense!

Da Gang was standing right before him!

Looking at the inebriated looking drunkard before him – he appeared no different from those alcoholics strolling through London in the night. Jean frowned and raised his bulbous nose. “Is there a problem?”

“Mr, may I borrow a lighter?”

Da Gang pretended to get close as he raised up the cigarette butt in his hand.

With an annoyed look on his face, Jean replied. "Don't you already have one?"

Da Gang smiled as he slowly took another two steps forward. Suddenly, he bent his waist forward!

Jean's eyes flickered and he quickly retreated. However, Da Gang's next move was to slap one hand onto the surface of the car, bend his waist down while facing the wheel of the car and puked out mouthful after mouthful of vomit.

"Damned bastard!" Jean furiously swore out. Observing the vomit, which reeked to the high Heavens, he decided to step back. However, he suddenly felt something cold on his neck!

At an unknown moment, a fine metal blade had emerged from the car's side mirror. It pierced through Jean's neck!

The sharp metal blade pierced right through Jean's neck and he fearfully stared at Da Gang with widened eyes.

By then, Da Gang had already straightened himself as he wiped his mouth – one of his hand remained in contact with the surface of the car.

Metallic ripples were seemingly spreading through the surface of the car! At the end of the ripples was the metal blade.

"Don't worry, don't worry, there is no need to be afraid," Da Gang stepped forward and clung onto Jean with one hand and he whispered to Jean. "I won't kill you – not now anyways. All I want is to find an interesting little pet for myself before the instance dungeon begins. Unfortunately for you, you happen to be the first person I laid my eyes upon after I had that idea."

Jean's eyes bulged open and he attempted to shout out. However, his throat had been pierced through, leading to him being unable to utter anything loud.

His eyes quickly turned red and his entire body began to swell. His muscles bulged and black coloured hair could be seen growing out at a rapid pace from his exposed neck area.

“Oh, are you thinking about using your skill?” Da Gang smiled softly. “No no no, you need to quiet down.”

The metal blade suddenly twisted and transformed into a flowing liquid metal. It then drilled its way into the neck...

After that... Jean’s bulging muscles and growing hair shrunk back down...

“Go to sleep, go to sleep, my little baby~”

Da Gang sang softly and his fingers softly caressed Jean’s bulbous nose – this action of his was not only terrifying, it also appear perverted...

Next, Da Gang grabbed Jean and tossed him into the car before getting onto the car as well.

“Not a bad car, you have good taste,” Da Gang stroked the steering wheel and smiled. He then started up the car, causing the car engine to roar out before slowly driving the car away.

...

“... ..I want to know!”

“... ..” Miao Yan looked at Chen Xiaolian for a full 5 seconds. Then, she covered her mouth and let out a burst of laughter. Her laughter was filled with so much glee that it almost appeared as though the one sitting before her was not Chen Xiaolian, but Mr. Bean.

“Is it funny?” Chen Xiaolian had an annoyed look on his face.

“Of course it is funny!” Miao Yan used her fingers to wipe the corners of her eyes. “This is the most amusing joke that I’ve heard of late.”

The woman abruptly withdrew the smile on her face and directed a solemn gaze at Chen Xiaolian. “It’s useless. Even if I do tell you, you will end up forgetting everything I tell you.”

“What if I still insist on wanting to know?” Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes. “Even though I know my memories will be erased, I want to know!”

“Very well, in that case...” Miao Yan looked at Chen Xiaolian.

...

A few seconds later...

...

Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Why aren’t you saying anything?”

Miao Yan cast a peculiar look at Chen Xiaolian and answered. “... .. if I were to tell you that I had already told you about it just now, and that you have already forgotten it all now... would you believe me?”

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

After saying that, Miao Yan smiled.

“Are you messing with me?” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

Miao Yan gave a light sigh. “No matter what I say, you will not believe me. Besides... you will never find out if I did say anything to you just now... because, even if you did hear what I said, the system will either block it or erase your memories!”

She then extended her hand out to point toward the ceiling. “The rules! The rules of the system are immutable!”

A look of fear appeared on Chen Xiaolian’s face.

He quietly took a deep breath and poured himself another glass of wine, which he then gulped down.

“About tonight, are you the one who asked for me, or... your Exclusive Account?”

...

Chapter 180: All For Naught

Miao Yan considered the question and answered. "It was me. More accurately, after arriving, I accidentally came to find out that you met up with my Exclusive Account... you see, Stewart is a very good butler. In the evening, he will report some stuff to his employer. To be honest, when I heard about you coming over here, I was very surprised."

"And then?"

"The one who wanted to invite you over is her," Miao Yan smiled. "Yet, the one to meet you is me."

"Then, the matter that I requested?"

Miao Yan smiled. "You mean the two girls that you were looking for? I wanted to ask, are the both of them your girlfriends? One of them appears a tad bit too young."

"I do not like that kind of joke," Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

"I couldn't find them. What I am able to gather is that Sir Pattinson had helped them make a reservation at my club. Those people simply stayed here for a few days before leaving. Sir Pattinson is an ordinary person who does not have much knowledge about this. He was simply helping a business acquaintance by making those arrangements. He arranged for those people to stay here for a couple of days – that was all he knew about this matter."

Business acquaintance... Chen Xiaolian immediately thought of Qiao Yifeng.

He sighed.

"Are those two girls very important to you? I mean, I remember that the young one was by your side in the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon. However, the older one... is your girlfriend, right?" Miao Yan looked into Chen Xiaolian's eyes. "Don't deny it. I can see it in your eyes."

"You should change your name to Foxy," Chen Xiaolian replied coldly.

“I will consider this suggestion of yours,” Miao Yan gestured with her head.

“So then... why did you invite me over tonight?”

“If my answer is ‘I do not know’, will you get angry?”

Chen Xiaolian held back the urge to flip the table over – he was clear that even if a fight were to occur, he was no match for this woman.

Back in the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon, this woman had been able to contend against a fully empowered Bai Qi!

“My Exclusive Account... truthfully, she is not much different from you... she is a normal person in this world. Thus, the things that she think about, the things that she does – normally, when I am not here, I would not be able to guess what she is thinking about. You can consider this as...” She suddenly pointed at her chest. “Consider it as a body sharing two souls.”

It had to be said, her slender finger was almost pointing at the round area on her chest. That posture was rather... indecent.

Chen Xiaolian did his best to move his gaze away to avoid looking at her snow-white valley.

“I came here to play around because I was feeling bored. Being able to meet you here is something of a surprise,” Miao Yan smiled. “I like to enter this world often, even when there is no instance dungeon. Taking this identity to experience the life in this world of yours. Just look, everything is quite lovely, wouldn’t you say?”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. His mind was considering something.

“Can you tell me... you being here in London, is there any other reason why you are here besides looking for those two girls?”

Chen Xiaolian became surprised. “An instance dungeon will be opening up in London soon, don’t you know?”

“I don’t know. I am not participating in that instance dungeon,” Miao

Yan looked at Chen Xiaolian. There was a gloating expression on her face. "It seems you were selected? All I can say is: Good luck to you, rookie. Back in the last instance dungeon, if it was not for me, you would probably have died... or failed the quest."

"Being able to survive is good enough," Chen Xiaolian replied coolly.

"Being able to survive is good enough?" Hearing those words, Miao Yan was seemingly stunned for a moment. Then, she lowered her voice and murmured even as she drank a mouthful of wine. "In your opinion, what is your definition of living?"

"Survive through the instance dungeons, not dying... at the same time, grow stronger and protect those you want to protect," Chen Xiaolian quickly answered.

Miao Yan's expression turned even more peculiar. There was a trace of loss and confusion in her eyes and she asked in a low tone. "That... is that so. That is the meaning of your existence..."

Observing her reaction, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt vexed.

"What is wrong with that?" Chen Xiaolian sneered. "My existence, me being a mere NPC, could I ask for more?"

Miao Yan suddenly smiled.

A peculiar light was seemingly shining through her eyes.

"You know, there was this one time when I entered – you see, I like to use this identity to live in your world and experience the interesting details of life here. For example, there was this one time where I went to the library to check out some articles regarding this world of yours. There, I saw something very interesting."

Chen Xiaolian was surprised. "You are not thinking about starting a discussion about literature with me, are you?"

"Of course not. However, the idea expressed in the article was very interesting."

Miao Yan softly continued. "The article was about the author's

experience of playing an interesting online game. He killed with frenzy in the game, levelled himself up maniacally, fought against other countries, established his own base of operations, developed new lands... all the way until he had thousands upon thousands of soldiers and horses. He unleashed his massive army through the lands of the game, sweeping away every monster he saw on the map.

“He felt happy with what he was doing. He felt as though he was looking down upon the world.

“However... he suddenly saw something on the monitor. There was a black shadow on the map, a black dot. It seemed like a monster that the game had spawned out. Thus, he moved his mouse and sent his massive army over to kill...

“It was then that the monster flew up, leaving the map, leaving the surface of the monitor.

“It turns out... that was just something that had unintentionally landed on the surface of his monitor...

“A mosquito.

“That’s right, just a pitiful little, piddling mosquito.

“At that moment, when the mosquito flew away... the overwhelming army that could cover the skies and move the lands... could only remain within the screen of the monitor, staring blankly at the mosquito.”

After saying that, Miao Yan looked into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes. “Don’t you think that this article is very interesting?”

“... ..”

Chen Xiaolian felt as though his heart had just received a heavy punch!

An incredibly strong feeling of suffocation gripped him and his heart pounded “peng peng peng peng”. It pounded violently again and again and again!

The casual manner in which Miao Yan had said those things and the tone she used became like a sword that had been viciously thrust into his

heart!

Miao Yan then continued. “Even if he was invincible without parallel within the game world, even if he had thousands upon thousands of soldiers and horses, against a mere mosquito of the real world, there was nothing his army could do against it... no matter how much more powerful you become inside a game world, no matter how much longer your lifespan becomes, no matter how you protect all those you wish to protect...

“In the eyes of the upper plane... what is the point of it all?

“Perhaps, one day, all the Development Team needs to do is to make a little modification to the program here and there to erase everything that you have struggled for and all the brilliant results that you have accomplished.”

Miao Yan stared into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes and abruptly laughed out. “This world of yours, there is an interesting phrase in the internet. How did it go again...

“In the end, it was all for naught, all for naught, right? He he.”

... .. Chen Xiaolian was utterly shocked!

...

A few minutes later, Chen Xiaolian left the building.

As he walked out, he saw a car parked outside.

Chen Xiaolian got into the car and sat inside, and the car slowly moved away from the manor. As for Chen Xiaolian, he was still thinking about what Miao Yan had said before they parted.

“I would like to ask you to stay as far away as possible from my Exclusive Account. This is a little personal request from me. This is the identity I use to experience your world, the identity of a normal person. Naturally, I do not wish to have anything to do with you Awakened ones... if that were to happen, then it would be pretty much the same as going through an instance dungeon. I do not want to be around a bunch of

Awakened ones while experiencing the normal things in this world. That would be totally pointless.”

“About our meeting tonight, I will completely delete the memories that this Exclusive Account have about it from the moment you met her... this is something well within my capabilities. Do not doubt me on that. High-class Players get better treatment, after all.

“Chen Xiaolian, one last thing. I wish you good luck. Survive through this London instance dungeon. Perhaps we will meet up again in another instance dungeon.

“Also... I am aware that you had turned on the recording function of your mobile phone since the moment you entered through the door. As you are heading home, you may listen to our conversation again.”

Chen Xiaolian recalled that as Miao Yan was saying that last sentence, she had given him a wink.

Chen Xiaolian sat in the car and quickly retrieved his mobile phone!

He was indeed recording! From the moment he saw Miao Yan, he had slipped his hand into his pocket and switched on the recording function on the mobile phone!

Within the car, Chen Xiaolian held the mobile phone to his ears and replayed the conversation he had with Miao Yan.

“It’s you?”

“... .. ‘85 Latour. It is definitely worth tasting.”

“... .. country bumpkin.”

“You want to know how our world looks like? Are you sure you want to know? Are you absolutely sure?”

“... I want to know!”

“It’s useless. Even if I do tell you, you will end up forgetting everything I tell you.”

“What if I still insist on wanting to know?”

“Very well, in that case...” The moment Miao Yan said that...

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian suddenly felt his throat becoming parched as his heart thumped furiously!

However, at that moment...

The voices coming from the phone’s replay suddenly...

Disappeared!

Chen Xiaolian held the phone and looked at it to determine that the phone was not malfunctioning. He saw that the replay function was still in progress.

However, when he held the phone to his ear, he could not hear a single sound coming from the phone!

Nothing!

Silence!

The silence lasted for more than 10 seconds!

More than 10 seconds of silence...

It was as though the more than 10 seconds... had been utterly erased!

Finally, a sound could be heard coming out once more from the mobile phone.

“Why aren’t you saying anything?”

“... .. if I were to tell you that I had already told you about it just now, and that you have already forgotten it all now... would you believe me?”

After hearing that, Chen Xiaolian turned off the replay and leaned heavily onto the back of the seat.

At that moment, his body had become incomparably heavy!

Outside the window, the endless nothingness of the silent sky suddenly appeared as though it was capable of utterly swallowing up everything!

“As expected...” Chen Xiaolian suddenly gave a sigh. With bitterness in his eyes, he muttered. “In the end... it is all for naught!”

Invincible without parallel? Thousands upon thousands of soldiers and horses?

A small mosquito?

All for naught!

...

Chapter 181: Reappearance

Within a dark room...

It was clearly an unknown basement.

Da Gang was seated before a computer and the flashing screen of the computer was the only source of light within the room. In one hand, Da Gang was holding on to a take-away meal box. The contents of the box were fried fish and chips. A bottle of Coke was placed beside him.

He chewed the fried fish that was dipped in tomato sauce while his other hand held on to the mouse and deftly moved it through the computer screen.

Behind Da Gang, the poor Frenchman, Jean was wrapped up and placed in a corner of the room, his being appeared similar to a mummy. Upon Jean's body was a layer of liquid metal. The liquid metal wrapped him up completely, exposing only a pair of eyes.

The pair of eyes stared at Da Gang's back. Those eyes were seemingly exhibiting both anger and fear.

Da Gang finally turned around just as he was tossing the last piece of fried fish into his mouth. He licked his fingers and smiled.

"Are you hungry too? What a pity, I only bought food for one. Oh, well. Going hungry for one or two days won't kill you. Hmm, the attributes of your body should have been enhanced before. So, that should not be a problem."

Da Gang walked before Jean and pulled over the chair from the computer table. Holding onto the bottle of Coke, he sat down and took a long sip of Coke from the straw. Then, he let out a lengthy belch.

"To be a pet, you must be aware that you are a pet," Da Gang smiled. Appearance wise, his smile was a good-natured smile. However, in Jean's eyes, the smile brought a terrifying chill down his spine.

"First, I need you to help me with something," Da Gang said coolly. "I need you to help me buy something from the Exchange System. Ah... the

points will definitely have to come from you. You should have some saved up, right?”

Jean. “... ..”

“Don’t try to contact your companions,” Da Gang sighed gently. “I have taken control of your central nervous system. If you want to use the guild channel to contact your companions... sigh, I really do not want to threaten you. Because, I really do not want to kill off a pet that I have just recently caught, understand?”

Jean. “... ..”

A few minutes later, Da Gang was able to get Jean to purchase the items he wanted from the Exchange System.

He moved over and turned off the computer screen. Then, he turned around, moved through the door and left the basement.

Outside the basement was an underground parking garage. Inside the garage were three different models of vehicles. Without exception, all three of them were SUVs that were durable and resistant to impacts.

“Time is getting closer and closer,” Da Gang glanced at his watch and said to himself. “What should I do to celebrate my first instance dungeon after being resurrected? Kill a couple of people? Or level two streets? Hmmm, would that be going overboard?”

“Sigh, just why did I end up getting resurrected? This is truly bothersome.

“Also... after being resurrected, why is the Exchange System not available?”

...

After returning to the hotel, Chen Xiaolian’s face appeared off colour.

The meeting he had with Miao Yan this night had not been a pleasant one. Especially the final incident...

Forcibly shaking his head, Chen Xiaolian tried his best to shake those thoughts out of his mind. Then, he opened the door into the hotel suite.

Roddy and the two brothers had not turned in. Instead, they were waiting for Chen Xiaolian's safe return.

"You don't look too good," Roddy quickly went forward.

"... .. I am fine."

"What is the result of the meeting? Is there any news?"

Chen Xiaolian shook his head. "None." He looked at his three guild members. "There is one thing though. We guessed correctly. The Countess is indeed Miao Yan's Exclusive Account. Going there tonight, I ended up meeting with Miao Yan."

The faces of those three turned tense.

Roddy however, was not too disturbed.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai were the only ones who had met Miao Yan in the instance dungeon before. They were well aware of just how immeasurably powerful this High-class Player was. For Awakened ones, bumping into a High-class Player was not something that could be considered safe.

"She did not make things difficult for you?"

"... strangely, no," Chen Xiaolian tried his best to ease the atmosphere. "She actually asked me to try out an '85 Latour."

Then, Chen Xiaolian summarized out the contents of his discussion with Miao Yan for them.

When he reached the matter of Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo's whereabouts, Roddy sighed. "It seems Boss Qiao have taken them away."

"Then, we'll just follow our previous plan. Completing the instance dungeon will be our primary objective," Chen Xiaolian said slowly. "Roddy, before the instance dungeon opens tomorrow, you must leave London City!"

"... .." Roddy did not say anything. He simply gave Chen Xiaolian a silent glance before nodding his head.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai who were beside them were silent for a moment.

Then, Lun Tai suddenly spoke up. “The recording of your conversation with Miao Yan, can you replay it again for us to listen?”

Chen Xiaolian cast a glance at Lun Tai. Lun Tai nodded his head.

He replayed the recording. When the replay reached the part where there was no sound, the faces of everyone in the room turned grim!

“... sigh!” Lun Tai sighed. “So, the legends were true! All information regarding the upper plane will be blocked off by the system.”

“All right. At present, Miao Yan is not a threat to us. The instance dungeon is,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly. “We’ll make preparations following our original plan – tonight, we must get a good night’s sleep. That will ensure that when the instance dungeon opens, everyone will be in good shape.”

...

The next morning, Roddy left London. He rented a car for this trip out of London.

Before he left, Chen Xiaolian went to face Roddy. “I know you do not feel at ease with this. However, you must understand. You not participating in this instance dungeon do not mean that you are not contributing to the guild. After the instance dungeon is over, you will be the guild member in charge of extraction! After undergoing an instance dungeon, there is the possibility of our battle strength being reduced. In order to ensure that we do not suffer from any malicious attacks from other guilds after the instance dungeon is over, you will become our reinforcements!”

“I’ll be ready.”

During the day, Lun Tai continued driving around to survey their surroundings. Chen Xiaolian drove around in another car as he too, was checking out the surroundings.

As for Bei Tai, he went to find his ‘friends’ to pick up some ‘goods’.

Chen Xiaolian’s mind was not at ease.

He did not have an international driving license. Additionally, he was not familiar with the UK's right-hand drive cars. Thus, he rode in a sightseeing MPV that he had rented from the hotel. He paid a fee to ensure that he could ride the MPV around London.

When noon came, his MPV reached London Bridge near the London Tower.

The loud sound of the bell echoed out toward him.

It was precisely 12 o'clock.

Today's weather was fairly agreeable. There was no haze about and the rays of light from the sun were quite acceptable. If anything, the temperature was a little on the low side.

Chen Xiaolian rolled down the window and looked out. His mind recalled the words that Miao Yan had said to him last night.

Mosquito?

Hmph!

As Chen Xiaolian was in a trance, the chauffeur who had been seated in front spoke up without turning his head.

"The instance dungeon is about to open up. It is not a good thing to be having this kind of mental state at this time."

Chen Xiaolian was shocked!

...

The chauffeur was recommended by the hotel. Appearance wise, he was of a typical Anglo-Saxon descent with average build, strong looking constitution, and a slightly balding head. After having rented his services for half a day, Chen Xiaolian saw that this fellow was clearly someone with a taciturn nature. Or perhaps, he was simply someone who was not good with words.

Unexpectedly, those words had come out from him...

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and he stared intently at the back of

the chauffeur's head.

The chauffeur continued driving the MPV, his eyes looking out the front windshield. He did not direct his gaze toward Chen Xiaolian at all.

Chen Xiaolian stared at him in silence for a few seconds before uttering. "GM?"

The chauffeur grinned. "I thought that you would panic and pull out a gun, or summon out the Four-eyed War Cat. It appears that you've undergone a good amount of training in the last three instance dungeons."

Chen Xiaolian let out a sigh of relief. Subsequently, he became anxious. "You... why did you suddenly appear?"

"That in itself is a wrong question," The chauffeur answered coolly. "To be precise, I am everywhere regardless of the time, understand?"

Chen Xiaolian. "... ..."

"Although I did not create you, I do look highly upon you," The chauffeur smiled as he drove. "Please remember, you are of great importance to me... oh, right. Let me turn on some music to lessen the awkwardness of this atmosphere."

After saying that, the chauffeur turned on the MPV's stereo. Soon, a song by John Lennon was played.

"Oh, for someone who is about to go risk his life, listening to a song by a dead musician is not a good sign."

Chen Xiaolian pursed his mouth to the side and retorted. "You deliberately did that, didn't you?"

"You see, I have also learned some stuff... this should be considered as humour. Or perhaps, it would be more accurate to label it as black humour, right?"

Chen Xiaolian looked at the chauffeur's face through the rear view mirror. "You are not a human!"

"Then what about you? Are you certain that you are a human?" The

chauffeur responded coolly.

Hearing his response, Chen Xiaolian become quiet.

I... am I a human?

This question is so ridiculous and absurd – of course, I am a human!

However, if... if I am just an NPC created from a virtual world, then... does that mean that I am not a ‘human’ in the real sense?

“Just what are you trying to tell me here?” A look of frustration was etched on Chen Xiaolian’s face.

Gazhi!

The MPV stopped by the side of an isolated street.

The driver turned over and looked at Chen Xiaolian. He stared right into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes.

“Because of the words you exchanged with Miao Yan last night.”

This time, there was no jest or wit in the chauffeur’s eyes. Instead, there was only seriousness!

Chen Xiaolian quietly opened the door and stepped out.

The chauffeur too, stepped out. He then moved to stand behind Chen Xiaolian.

“Just what are you trying to achieve here!”

Chen Xiaolian abruptly turned around. He used both hands to seize the chauffeur’s collar and he spat furiously in a low tone. “I feel like a damned pawn! I hate this kind of feeling! What are you trying to use me for? What is your objective?”

The chauffeur remained indifferent. Not minding that Chen Xiaolian was seizing his clothes, he coolly replied. “I had clearly told you about it the last time we met.”

“For the sake of... ‘resisting’ them? To complete the instance dungeons and stop the Players from winning?”

“Correct,” The chauffeur looked into Chen Xiaolian’s eyes. “Like you, I do not wish to ‘die’. Or rather, I do not wish to be ‘refreshed’.”

“Then help me out! Don’t just spit these damned unreasonable riddles at me!” Chen Xiaolian loosened his grip.

He was unable to keep a handle on his emotions.

...

Chapter 182: Encroaching Upon The Forbidden Zone

The chauffeur lightly patted the wrinkled area of his collar before looking eye to eye with Chen Xiaolian. “I can give you the specific whereabouts of Qiao Qiao and Soo Soo. But, not now... at present, you need to put all your focus into surviving this instance dungeon. If possible, I would rather not have such a rare Irregularity die on me.”

“Irregularity? Don’t you mean virus?”

“Even if you are a virus, you are still the prime virus! As for your other guild members, Qiao Qiao, Roddy... they are all second-generation viruses who were infected by you... do you understand?”

“Wait a minute, I don’t get it... what do you mean prime, and why second-generation...”

“The metallic sphere that represents the account,” The chauffeur stared intently at Chen Xiaolian. “Only when a Player or an Awakened is killed by you, will the metallic sphere drop out. You should already have known about this.”

Indeed, Chen Xiaolian knew about this.

That was how Roddy and Qiao Qiao was able to get their hands on the metallic spheres and become Irregularities.

“You probably haven’t figured out this one other thing. Only when... the prime viruses kill an Awakened will the metallic sphere come out. The prime viruses that I am talking about are none other than... you and Soo Soo. Only the two of you.

“As for Qiao Qiao and Roddy, they are the equivalent of second-generation viruses that were infected by you... when they kill an Awakened or a Player, the metallic sphere will not drop out, understand?

“Thus... the existence of prime viruses is a valuable thing! You people are the source, the only ones who can continue to create Irregularities! If

both you and Soo Soo were to die... then that would be the end. It doesn't matter if it is Qiao Qiao or Roddy, neither of them could get the metallic spheres to drop out when killing Awakened ones and Players. [1]"

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

"Between you and a little girl, it is only natural that I have more expectations toward you."

Virus... source?

Only he and Soo Soo could create more viruses...

Chen Xiaolian abruptly raised his head and directed his gaze into the chauffeur's eyes!

He kept his eyes staring forward for a full 10 seconds.

Then, he asked something peculiar.

"The upper plane... how does it look like?"

The chauffeur's face turned slightly odd. Then, he slowly shook his head. "You already know that I cannot tell you. This is the rules of the system. Not to mention, those rules are the fundamental directive! As for me, it would not be wrong to say that I am part of the system. I cannot violate the fundamental directive of the system."

Chen Xiaolian snorted and continued in a frosty tone. "Very well, you do not need to say anything. I'll guess!"

He pointed toward the chauffeur. Then, he retracted his finger and pointed toward his nose. "First, the 'life form' in the upper plane must be humans! Humans that are similar to us!"

"Oh? How can you be so certain?"

"Very simple!" Chen Xiaolian was quick to come up with an answer and he continued immediately.

"Normally speaking, when people create a virtual world, be it a game or a movie, or even literature and novels... the protagonist would usually be created in the image of their own species!"

“In World of Warcraft, the protagonists were designed to have humanoid shape. In Lord of the Rings as well, the one who wins in the end is the humans!

“The novels written by Jinyong also feature humans as the main characters!

“In nearly every novel, the story that was written would be dominated by humans!

“Because the creator is a human!

“As for us... this world we occupy is one where the civilizations are led by humans!

“As such, the ones who created this world, this game, they must also be human. Those Players... are certainly humans!”

The chauffeur raised his eyebrows.

Chen Xiaolian rapidly continued. “They probably created us by using their own appearance as a template.”

“Hmm, and?”

“And...” Chen Xiaolian walked around in a circle and kneaded his forehead before replying. “And... I suspect that a major portion of the composition of their civilization mirrors ours.

“Truthfully, all the worlds created in the Western fantasy novels uses Western medieval civilization as a base template.

“Even the creation of the background setting in Jinyong’s martial arts novels utilizes our country’s ancient historical records as a base.

“Therefore, when creating the civilization of our world... during the process of creation, a large portion of it was created by referring to their own civilization as a model!”

“Interesting. Anything else?”

“Of course!” Chen Xiaolian replied coldly. “Here in this game, in the instance dungeons... all the abilities, be it equipment, machinery, mech,

martial arts, extraordinary abilities... those strange War Pets... all of them likely do not exist in the upper plane!”

“Oh? Just now, you mentioned that they referred to themselves for base template...”

“That is a different concept in its entirety. Since they are constructing a virtual world for people to enter and experience, they must naturally satisfy some fantasy aspects in order to make it enjoyable. If they were to create a world that was completely similar to theirs, what meaning would there be in playing this game? What sort of gameplay value would it hold?

“It is based on reality, yet it has to exceed it. That is the fundamental mind-set when creating a game.

“To be able to do things that one usually could not do in the real world is what makes a game interesting.

“Thus... I am willing to make a bet! Those Players who entered out world... they could not exhibit such extraordinary powers in their own world!”

After having said those words, Chen Xiaolian looked at the chauffeur with a somewhat excited expression. “Am I right? Did I get close? Their world, their social structure, their civilization, they should be similar to ours! The only exception would be that they do not possess those extraordinary powers. Additionally... the level of their civilization should be far above ours!”

The chauffeur quietly allowed Chen Xiaolian to finish speaking.

He stared at Chen Xiaolian. However, no change in expression could be seen on his face. There was neither agreement nor objection. Rather, not even a trace of emotion could be detected.

After what seemed like an eternity, he slowly said. “Perhaps you are right, perhaps you are wrong... however, I am unable to answer your question.”

“... ..”

“I’ve mentioned this before; all information pertaining to the upper plane cannot be disclosed. That is the prime fundamental directive of the system. Any and all such information would be blocked off. Thus, no one could inform you about it. That includes me,” The chauffeur said. Then, he smiled. “Also... even if I want to tell you, I wouldn’t be able to. Because... I too, am not in the know.”

“... ..”

“Do not forget, I am just like you, a ‘virtual’ existence within this world. I am not a life form from the upper plane. I am just a... metaphorically speaking; I am just the management program for the system. Hmm, that comparison is more appropriate.”

“Just like a computer, we are part of the program inside the computer while you are the system’s management program. When it comes to the matters regarding the world outside the computer... not even you could know how it looks like?” Chen Xiaolian looked at the chauffeur.

“Correct, that is simply how it is.”

The chauffeur nodded his head. Next, his tone turned solemn.

“The reason I came looking for you today is because there are two things that I need to warn you about.”

“Hmph!”

“First, the conversation you had with Miao Yan yesterday... you had best not try to pull that stunt a second time. Any attempt to spy on the upper plane will be blocked off by the system. Additionally... it will increase your chances of being found out by the system! The only reason you are still in the safe is because you are an Irregularity.

“Remember what I told you last time?”

“As an Irregularity, you are the equivalent of a virus in the system. The system will not categorize you as an NPC, nor would it categorize you as an Awakened. When separating the categories, the system’s scan for NPCs would fail to detect you. The same goes during the system’s scan for Awakened ones.

“For the time being, you have yet to be subjected to the system’s monitoring.

“However, if you try to pry into the forbidden zone, you would likely trigger the system’s alarm.

“Because any leak in information regarding the upper plane is forbidden. That is the system’s prime fundamental directive!

“Prime fundamental directive supersedes all else!

“Any existence that encroaches upon the prime fundamental directive, regardless of your identity, would result in the system’s retaliation!

“You could compare it to an artificial pond.

“Originally, the owner is only raising two things, fishes and prawns. The fishes represent the NPCs while the prawns represent Awakened ones.

“As for you, you are unexpected existence, a loach. By hiding inside the pond, you were able to escape being found by the owner.

“However, once you attempt to escape from the pond and encroach upon the forbidden zone, you will come in contact with the power grid and be found out!

“When that happens... I believe there is no need for me to tell you what the consequences would be.”

Chen Xiaolian revealed a glum look on his face and he did not say anything.

The chauffeur nodded his head. “Remember my warning. Do not encroach upon the forbidden zone.”

“And?” Chen Xiaolian asked coldly. “Earlier, you mentioned that there were two things.”

“The second thing is related to the instance dungeon that you are going to participate in,” The chauffeur’s expression loosened. “Contrary to what you might think, this instance dungeon might be more...”

“More difficult?”

“No no no, for the most part, the designated class given by the system to an instance dungeon is accurate,” The chauffeur shook his head. “I don’t mean that it will be more difficult. Rather... it will be somewhat more complicated.”

“Complicated? What is that supposed to mean?”

“How should I put it... in the instance dungeons that you participated before, there was an unusual circumstance in one of them,” The chauffeur scratched his head. “The difficulty for the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon had exceeded the evaluation given by the system. The reason for that was Miao Yan’s participation. She utilized the privilege of a High-class Player to enter the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang instance dungeon. However, the class of her abilities and strength was too high, far higher than the mean average of the other participants. Thus, the system automatically increased the difficulty of the instance dungeon. As a result...”

“As a result, the monstrously powerful Bai Qi appeared! His appearance nearly caused the utter annihilation of every single participant,” Chen Xiaolian knitted his eyebrows.

“That about sums it up,” The chauffeur nodded his head. “This time, something almost similar might happen. Only, the specifics will be different.”

“Different?”

...

—

1 The GM is talking about non-instance dungeon circumstance only. In instance dungeons, Players and Awakened ones will drop the spheres whenever they die, regardless of who or what killed them. The biggest difference of note between Chen Xiaolian and Soo Soo and the other Irregularities is that the two of them were meant to be dead in an instance dungeon. Instead, these two ‘dead’ NPCs activated the metal spheres within that same instance dungeon. I am not sure if that is what makes them different.

Chapter 183: Strange Name

“Yes,” The chauffeur took a deep breath and said. “For this time’s instance dungeon, a third-party might participate in it.”

“Third-party?” Chen Xiaolian became puzzled. “I do not understand? What do you mean by third-party?”

“Neither a Player nor an Awakened,” The chauffeur slowly answered. “It has come to my attention that the system had generated several special accounts. Based on past experience, these special accounts are settings made by the Development Team. They are special accounts used to enter the game.”

“GM?” Chen Xiaolian frowned. He asked. “Doesn’t that make them the same as you?”

“No no no, I am not an account. I am a management program within the system itself,” The chauffeur answered slowly. “This special account... how should I put it... it is similar to a specially assigned investigator, an overseer or inspector... something along those lines.

“At times, these special accounts would be generated in order to inspect whether or not an instance dungeon is working normally. It is also used to test out an instance dungeon to find BUGs. If anything irregular is detected, they can make a report to make changes etc...

“It is similar to a... pipe cleaner, a member of the investigation team.”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

“What is that supposed to mean? An official minister sent by the government? How are the Players and Awakened ones supposed to fight under such circumstances? They might as well just surrender,” Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly.

“This is a different matter,” The chauffeur said coolly. “Naturally, this special account has special abilities. However, the special abilities will not be overpowered to the point of tipping the balance of the game. Rather... in certain areas, they will have functions that are different from

the game participants. For example, an immortal body, special protection by the system or access to special password for clearance right from the beginning... and so on and so forth. My point being, this special account would usually not find itself in too much of a conflict with Players. Also, its objective is not to complete the instance dungeon quest and it will not compete against Players for resources.

“Naturally, there would only be no conflict when they are facing Players. If they meet Awakened ones, they won’t hold back and would kill.

“Generally speaking though, these special accounts would hide themselves and do their best not to expose themselves.”

After saying that, the chauffeur looked at Chen Xiaolian. “As for you, you should practice caution. If you encounter a special account, you would do well to keep your head down. Do not let them find out that you are different. Otherwise, I need not tell you what the consequences would be.”

Chen Xiaolian’s heart became heavy and he sighed. “It’s getting even more complicated.”

“This occurrence does not happen all too often. Although, it does routinely happen,” The chauffeur smiled and patted Chen Xiaolian’s shoulder. He then retrieved a cigarette from his pocket and lit it up. Taking a puff, he said. “Don’t worry; I will give you some special treatment.”

“Oh?”

“I cannot give you too many benefits. As part of the system, I cannot undermine and go against the fundamental directives of the system. I can only make use of loopholes to give you some benefits, within certain limits of course. Take for example, the Exchange System.”

Chen Xiaolian was quick to speak out. “That is right! Last time, you said you would compensate me for that. Now, you should be able to do it, right?”

“Don’t you already have a humanoid discount card?”

“But, if I have to go through others whenever I want to buy something, as time goes on, the risk of exposure becomes higher. Besides, Xia Xiaolei won’t be following me into an instance dungeon every time. When he is not around, if I am to ask other guild members to help me purchase something...”

“Your compensation will arrive soon. That I promise you,” The chauffeur took another puff and the smoke exhaled covered his eyes from sight. “This time, after you enter the instance dungeon, your personal Exchange System will be opened. It is something I made for you using the loophole in the system. However, there will still be some restrictions.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed. “Restrictions? I knew it. Spit it out then, what is the restriction.”

“... your Exchange System can only be opened during instance dungeon periods. It will be unusable during normal times,” The chauffeur slowly said. “When an instance dungeon is opened, the instance dungeon and its surrounding areas will be separated from this world. Thus, the amount of surveillance placed upon it would be less.”

Chen Xiaolian considered it.

If it could only be used during instance dungeon period, then so be it. At the very least, it was still better than having none.

“For this London instance dungeon, I will be able to use this Exchange System?”

“Err... the function of the Exchange System that you get might differ slightly from other Awakened ones,” The chauffeur threw a glance at Chen Xiaolian. There was seemingly an expression of guilt in his eyes. “I won’t go into the specifics for now. When the time comes, you will understand. Additionally... the types of items available are somewhat reduced. Naturally, some necessary items would still be available. It’s just that, for weapons, equipment, skills, materials and the likes, those would not be complete. Additionally, there will also be... a slight difference.”

After saying that, he saw Chen Xiaolian glaring at him and he quickly added. “However, I will continue to help you fill in the missing items.

That takes time, so we'll have to proceed step by step."

The two of them got onto the MPV once more and Chen Xiaolian had the chauffeur drive him back to the hotel.

After getting into the MPV, the chauffeur no longer said anything. Moreover... after a moment of silence, Chen Xiaolian regarded the chauffeur from behind. This action of his caused a peculiar reaction from the fellow.

"Mr? Is there any problem with my service?"

"... .. no," Chen Xiaolian sighed.

He knew that the GM had left.

The MPV's stereo was still playing John Lennon's song. The chauffeur hesitated for a bit before asking in a low tone. "Do I need to turn off the music?"

Chen Xiaolian raised his eyebrows. "No, just leave it open, It is quite a good song."

After listening for a few minutes, he began to hum gently along with the rhythm.

"{Imagine theres no heaven ...}"

Hmm, this game world really have no Heaven... perhaps, even Hell does not exist.

...

In the evening, just before 10 o'clock...

In the hotel room, Chen Xiaolian, Lun Tai and Bei Tai had finished the necessary preparations. The three of them left the hotel room and walked toward the parking area. There, they got onto a car that they had prepared early on.

"Let's start!" Bei Tai, this reckless fellow appeared to be in a very excited state. He exclaimed. "London baby!"

"Bei Tai, shut your mouth!" Lun Tai frowned. "Be vigilant! Don't go play

around with your life!”

Bei Tai grumbled. “This is not the first time though.”

Chen Xiaolian sat at the front passenger position and he silently stared outside the window.

“Guild Leader, has the information regarding the instance dungeon been sent over?” Lun Tai asked.

“It has,” Chen Xiaolian furrowed his eyebrows and he quickly sent the details through the guild channel.

...

[System prompt: London instance dungeon has been opened. This instance dungeon number is D066. This instance dungeon will involve the accumulation of marks and Players will enter immediately after the instance dungeon is opened, no delay in time of arrival.

[The first phase of the quest is a random quest.

[Quests will be distributed at random...

[Meteor Rock Guild’s selected quest: Please rush to the following address within 30 minutes, Whitechapel in East London. After entering the Whitechapel area within 30 minutes, you will receive the follow-up quest prompt. If you fail to arrive at the location within 30 minutes, please wait for the next random quest to be issued. Also, marks will be deducted.

[Prompt: In the first phase, completing the random quest will garner you marks for this instance dungeon. These marks will serve an important role in the following phases and the ranking of the participants.

[Meteor Rock Guild’s current marks: 0 marks.]

Random quests, marks...

All those key points appear to be very important.

Chen Xiaolian pondered it through. “The quests are randomly

distributed while the completion of one will garner us marks. If we are unable to reach the designated location, our marks will be deducted... if I have to guess, if we fail to complete the random quest, we will also suffer from a deduction of marks.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian quickly continued. “There should be a considerable number of those random quests... I think, the number of Players and Awakened ones participating in this instance dungeon should be quite big. I wonder if there is any overlap in the random quests we receive.”

“Hard to say,” The veteran Lun Tai forwarded his opinion. “This time, there is no delay to the arrival time for Players... in other words...”

“Perhaps there is no competition involved in this first phase of random quests. Thus, the system did not place a delay in the arrival time of Players,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said.

Bei Tai shouted. “Who cares! What is the location of the address? We should go there first!”

“Let’s move out! We’ll get to the first random quest first! Otherwise, we will have our marks deducted. We presently have 0 marks. If a deduction happens, it will become negative,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

Lun Tai quickly started up the car and activated the GPS navigation system.

Under the night sky, their car rushed out of the underground warehouse and galloped through the streets of London.

Target location: Whitechapel in East London!

...

In the history of the UK, East London was a long-time slums area, one associated with the words backward, poor and dirty.

However, during the London Olympics... because the Olympics were to be held in the East London area, the UK government implemented a thorough transformation of the East London area, giving it a vast face-lift.

The car quickly charged its way to Whitechapel in East London. Seeing a junction, they stopped the car before the entrance to a subway station.

To Chen Xiaolian and his team's surprise, another car rapidly charged forward from a distance away on the street in the quiet night. When the car came to a halt, the harsh sound of brakes rang out and it came to a stop by the side of the street.

"Looks like we have someone on the same path as us!" Lun Tai grunted. He turned his gaze out through the window to look at the other car. The one driving the car was giving them a cold stare.

Peng peng.

The doors of the car were opened and several people jumped down from the car. The number of people on their side was clearly higher than them, a total of five.

The driver was a lean man who wore a leather vest on his body and a large belt. He tied up several knife sheathes on his arm; all of them were filled with daggers.

The other two wore black suits and fedoras. They were actually a pair of twins who looked exactly the same.

The most conspicuous one among them was a thickset man with towering stature. He sported a short hairstyle and his muscles rippled outward explosively. As he was jumping down from the car, his hand was also gripping onto a hammer – most peculiarly though, was that a monkey was placed on his shoulder.

The monkey was wearing mini-sized clothes and it chattered about a few times. Then, it climbed up to the thickset man's head and shrank its body.

The thickset man stepped forward before turning sideways, making way for the female coming down behind him.

It was a young woman.

Almost instantly, the young woman attracted everyone's gazes!

There was no need for words. This young woman standing before them was definitely a calamitous beauty with no equal [1]!

She had a tall, exquisitely slender body with ample breasts and shapely waist. It almost seemed as though a breeze could blow her away. She had long, black coloured hair with a slight natural curl. Her face was flawless and extremely delicate despite not having the slightest makeup on it. Her fine and delicate white skin exhibited a rosy flush of youth and vitality. Her eyelashes were long and a pair of bright eyes added to her beauty. A casual glance exuded an indescribably gentle charm.

She was the most beautiful woman that Chen Xiaolian had ever laid his eyes upon!

Appearance wise, this young woman's beauty had surpassed both Qiao Qiao and Miao Yan!

Chen Xiaolian had never seen such a beautiful young woman before!

As Chen Xiaolian was observing her, the young woman's eyes swept over. After sweeping over the three of them, her eyes then locked on decisively onto Chen Xiaolian.

Both sides were separated by a street and they stared at each other. There was a faint atmosphere of confrontation in the air.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai were quietly getting ready for a fight.

At that moment, the young woman pursed her lips and smiled.

That smile of hers seemingly wiped away the tense atmosphere, leaving no trace of it behind.

The young woman maintained her smile and crossed the street. Taking wide strides, she walked over.

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. He determined that the young woman's eyes held no traces of hostility and gestured to Lun Tai and Bei Tai not to take action. Then, he took a few steps forward.

"Same kind?" The young woman asked. Her voice was sweet and gentle, without being repulsive. Although she had a soft and charming face, her

words were spoken with gentleness and attention. "Are you not going to introduce yourself?"

Chen Xiaolian considered her words and said. "Same kind? How would you know?"

"What is the difference?" The young woman's eyes revealed a smiling expression. "Not all Players are hostile toward Awakened ones."

"You did not answer my question," Chen Xiaolian said with care.

"We are Awakened ones," The young woman showed no qualms about answering the question. "By my guess, you fellows are also Awakened ones."

Chen Xiaolian had wanted to ask her: How did you know that?

Before he could forward his question, the young woman had already stretched out one hand and said. "Let's introduce each other. The one standing behind me, the driver's name is Dagger. The one with the pet is called Monster. As for the two fellows with the same appearances, they are the Titan brothers. Don't ask me who is the older brother and who is the younger brother. Truth be told, there are times when even I get confused."

After saying that the young woman deliberately winked.

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He shook hands with her and immediately let go. He could feel the softness of her slender fingers.

"The two fellows behind me is Lun Tai and Bei Tai. They are also brothers."

The young woman smiled. "What interesting names. What about you?"

"Chen Xiaolian, Meteor Rock Guild Leader."

The young woman appeared shocked for a moment. Then, she smiled. "Meteor Rock Guild? If I recall correctly, your Guild Leader should be Qiu Yun."

"I am the Guild Leader now," Chen Xiaolian shook his head. He was not interested in delving too deep into it.

“Well then, Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian,” The young woman smiled.
“We are the Coffeehouse Guild. I am the Guild Leader. My name is...
Phoenix.”

Phoenix?

What a... strange name.

...

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[Previous Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Dagger. Raw: ‘匕首’, pinyin: ‘bǐ shǒu’.

Monster. Raw: ‘怪兽’, pinyin: ‘guài shòu’.

Titan. Raw: ‘泰坦’, pinyin: ‘tài tǎn’.

Phoenix. Raw: ‘凤凰’, pinyin: ‘fèng huáng’.

1 An idiom indicating that a woman is so beautiful, she could cause kingdoms to collapse. This usually happens when 2 or more kings catch sight of said woman... or princes... you get the idea...

Chapter 184: Random Quest

“Coffeehouse Guild?” Lun Tai spoke out from behind Chen Xiaolian. “I have never heard of that name before.”

“This world is big; there is nothing to be surprised about. Besides, our guild is still a very young guild,” Phoenix smiled. Then, the smile slowly faded away from the young woman’s face.

Despite the casual words spoken by the young woman, Chen Xiaolian did not let go of the sense of vigilance within his heart.

There was a restriction to the establishment of a guild! To establish a guild, they would require a veteran! No matter how young the guild members may seem, the strength of a guild with a veteran in it should never be underestimated.

“Is your random quest also to come to Whitechapel area?” Phoenix asked Chen Xiaolian as she stood by the street. Her tone was both cool and genial.

“Yes, the Whitechapel area,” Chen Xiaolian glanced at the time. “The countdown... there is only less than one minute.”

Phoenix pondered for a moment and looked at Chen Xiaolian before speaking out slowly. “Let’s talk, shall we?”

“Go ahead.”

“Clearly, this quest is probably a non-competitive type,” Phoenix smiled. “A clear indication of this is the fact that this instance dungeon did not delay the Player’s time of arrival. Since the random quest is not a competitive type of quest... I think there is no need for us to be hostile toward each other, right?”

Chen Xiaolian looked at the incredibly beautiful young woman. “Your meaning?”

“Let’s cooperate,” Phoenix leisurely extended out one hand and winked at Chen Xiaolian. She smiled and said. “The more people we have collecting firewood, the higher the flames can burn. Let’s work together

on this random quest. I believe that would reduce the difficulty. Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian, what do you say?”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He tilted his head and saw that Lun Tai and Bei Tai had no objections on the matter.

“I have no problems with that,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “We have no reason to be hostile against one another.”

“Then, we have an agreement,” Phoenix smiled. She turned around and casually placed her hands behind her back. She was like a little girl as she pranced across the street. She then smiled and spoke in a carefree voice, no different from a little girl trying to show off her achievements. “All right, I have finished the negotiations!”

Phoenix moved beside her guild members and patted Dagger on his shoulder. “Put your knives away. Monster, keep an eye on your pet and make sure it doesn’t scare our friends here. Titan brothers... err, all right, can you please come over here and quietly and tell me which one of you is the older brother and which one is the younger brother?”

Chen Xiaolian who was standing by the street observed her. Watching as the young woman who looked like a little angel joked around with her guild members, he frowned.

This... what part of her looks like a Guild Leader?

“Don’t let your guard down,” Lun Tai whispered.

“En,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

One minute later, the countdown ended.

However, after seeing the information issued by the system, Chen Xiaolian became dumbfounded on the spot.

[System prompt: Your guild has successfully arrived at the designated area. You have successfully received this random quest. The details of this random quest is as follows:

[A. The most infamous event in the history of Whitechapel awaits you. Solve the mystery shrouded by the mists of history!

[B. The system has randomly assigned you a guide character. This character will be displayed on the radar as a yellow dot. Please find this guide character as soon as possible and protect the guide character! If the guide character dies, the quest will be deemed a failure! Corresponding marks will be deducted.

[C. Time limit for this quest is 48 hours (upper limit). Completing the quest ahead of time will cause the termination of this random quest. If the quest cannot be completed, the quest will be deemed a failure and the corresponding amount of marks will be deducted.]

The most infamous incident in the history of Whitechapel?

Chen Xiaolian shared out the details of the quest through the guild channel and considered the matter. Then, his face turned ugly to behold!

The most infamous incident in the history of Whitechapel... son of a bitch!

It can't be!

Chen Xiaolian balled up his fists and swore.

"Guild Leader, what is it?" Bei Tai glanced at him and saw the twisted look on Chen Xiaolian's face. Unable to restrain himself, he asked.

"The most infamous incident in the history of Whitechapel... solve the mystery!" Chen Xiaolian furiously swore out again! For the past two days, thanks to Roddy's help, he had been able to read up on many historical events pertaining to the UK, especially those that happened in London.

When it came to this Whitechapel area... after searching through his memory carefully, Chen Xiaolian was quick to find out which one the system was referring to.

"Jack the Ripper!" Chen Xiaolian furiously spat out each word.

Jack the Ripper!

The most notorious and most horrifying serial killer of the 1880s!

Brutally killing off his victims, cutting open their abdomens and pulling out their organs was his method of operations, which he committed over

and over again!

The fact that left Chen Xiaolian frustrated was...

Jack the Ripper's identity was a mystery within the history of the world itself! It has been over a hundred years since then, yet... the case remained unsolvable!

In the end, the identity of Jack the Ripper, the serial murderer remained a mystery.

Over a hundred years ago, the police failed to find anything. And now, the future generations could only make speculations based on the various historical literature available – still, no answer could be found.

But the problem here was, the quest given by the system was...

Solve the mystery!

Additionally... within 48 damned hours?

Within 48 hours, solve a mystery that not even the elites of the police force could solve after over a hundred years?

Chen Xiaolian felt the desire to curse out again and again.

“First... don't get distracted! Find the guide character first!”

Chen Xiaolian quickly opened up his own radar. Soon, he found a small yellow dot on the surface of the radar... furthermore; he noted that the dot was moving slowly!

Without hesitating, Chen Xiaolian quickly turned around and led Lun Tai and Bei Tai away!

From across the road, Phoenix and her guild members quickly caught up with them. Soon, Phoenix was moving beside Chen Xiaolian. Running beside him, she smiled. “Didn't we agree to cooperate? Leaving without saying a word is not the traits of a good ally, you know?”

“Finding the guide character takes priority,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

Following the radar, they ran all the way until they reached the

entrance to the Whitechapel's subway station.

They hesitated for only a moment before running down the stairs.

It was nearly 11 o'clock by then. Although the subway station had yet to cease operations, its hall appeared empty. The spacious hall was quiet.

Suddenly, someone ran in. Before the figure could make its way down the stairs, Chen Xiaolian heard Phoenix calling out.

"Look, there is a human figure there!"

Chen Xiaolian cast a glance over and saw a figure wearing traditional looking grey coloured suit disappear into a corner. The fellow also appeared to be wearing an odd-looking hat.

For some unknown reason, Chen Xiaolian felt that there was something indescribably peculiar about the figure.

He froze for a moment and inadvertently lowered his head before suddenly realizing what it was!

Due to the lighting above their heads, shadows were being casted down beneath their feet and even the walls beside them.

However, the figure who had disappeared into the corner... did not have any shadow!

Although he only had a glimpse, Chen Xiaolian was able to recall that... there was definitely no shadow!

He quickly ran forward and gave chase.

However, after turning over the corner, he became shocked.

Before him... was a wall.

He turned and saw Phoenix running over from behind.

Without waiting for him to speak up, Phoenix said slowly. "I was not mistaken... you should have seen the figure as well."

"Hmm," Chen Xiaolian suddenly curled the corners of his mouth. "This is interesting."

“The yellow dot is still on the move... it is right below!” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “Go to the platform!”

As they were charging their way through the ticket counters of the subway station, they heard the roaring sound of a subway train speeding through the station.

It was at that instant that a miserable scream suddenly rang out from below!

Before Chen Xiaolian’s eyes, Phoenix’s figure darted forth from beside him. Like a breeze, she flew forward and rapidly made her way down!

Chen Xiaolian and the others rushed down onto the platform and saw Phoenix standing right there, her eyes fixed onto something not far away.

The surface of the platform was covered with blood! The blood had even flowed all the way to the rails below the platform.

A man was kneeling down on the ground. Observing his back, they could see that he was trembling.

Additionally... there was also a corpse on the ground!

...

It was the corpse of a woman, that much was obvious.

The dead woman did not appear old. However, her face was covered with blood. Thus, they could not make out her original appearance.

However, one glance at her state of death was enough to nearly cause Chen Xiaolian to vomit out the contents of his dinner.

The woman’s chest and abdomen had been carved open. All her internal organs had been pulled out and were strewn all over the ground.

This place was now like a slaughterhouse!

The man who was kneeling on the ground appeared to be in shock. He had both hands covering his mouth. Suddenly, he turned over and forced himself up. After taking two steps, he then let out a heave and retched all over the platform.

Chen Xiaolian fought back the feeling of nausea and took a few steps forward. When he reached Phoenix's side, he heard her whispering.

"That man... yellow dot. He is the guide character."

Chen Xiaolian's expression turned solemn and he waved toward Lun Tai and Bei Tai. Phoenix too, signalled toward her team members with her eyes.

Glancing at one another, they slowly walked forward.

The difference was, Phoenix was walking toward the corpse while Chen Xiaolian was walking toward the guide character.

The guide character puked his contents out onto the side of the platform for a long time, his back heaved up and down and he gasped for breath.

Chen Xiaolian stood behind him without saying anything. His eyes swept the area and he determined that there was no danger present in their vicinity.

At that moment, he caught sight of... Phoenix...

Phoenix was squatted beside the corpse and she actually had one hand stretched out as she checked out the corpse!

There was seemingly no trace of fear coming off her. Observing her from the side, her attractive and charming face showed no change. Her face was a mask of calmness!

The grounds were covered with blood, internal organs littered the surrounding area and the stench of blood rose to the high Heavens... yet, there was a young and beautiful woman crouching beside the corpse. This scenery was a truly peculiar one.

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and fixed a profound stare at Phoenix before turning away. He placed a hand onto the shoulder of the guide character.

"Mr, are you all right?"

"What!"

The guide character appeared shocked. Due to his nervousness, he actually failed to realize that there was someone behind him. He cried out in shock. If not for Chen Xiaolian moving forward to catch him, he would have fallen down from the platform.

But when the guide character turned his head around, he caught sight of Chen Xiaolian and the both of them became shocked!

Guide character: "It... it's you?"

Chen Xiaolian. "... ..you are... Doctor Mu?"

Chapter 185: Doctor Mu

Naturally, this was the Dr Mu he had met back in Hangzhou. He was Da Gang's attending doctor whom they later encountered in one of Hangzhou's restaurant and once more in the train station.

The impression he left on Chen Xiaolian was that of a highly ethical and responsible doctor – in today's society, people like him was rare.

Dr Mu too, was able to identify Chen Xiaolian. "You are, you are that, that..."

"It's me," Chen Xiaolian helped him up. Sensing that Dr Mu's body was still feeling weak, he brought Dr Mu over to the side of the platform where some seats were available. He then helped him down the seat and he inhaled several times.

Chen Xiaolian retrieved a bottle of mineral water from his Storage Watch. After unscrewing it, he handed it over.

"... .. thank you," Dr Mu's face was a discoloured mess, filled with the colours blue and grey. The hand he used to accept the bottle of mineral water trembled.

"Can you tell me what happened here?" Chen Xiaolian watched as Dr Mu gulped down several mouthfuls of water. After seeing that the doctor had calmed down somewhat, he asked the question slowly.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai moved nearby. They stood not far away from the two of them. As for the team members of the Coffeehouse Guild, they were all gathered around Phoenix. Phoenix, who had finished her inspection of the corpse made a gesture toward Chen Xiaolian. Using her mouth, she formed a word out without making any sound. Observing her, Chen Xiaolian was able to understand what she wanted to say.

The word Phoenix had said was: Ripper.

Dr Mu finally calmed down and he began to narrate.

"I... was rushing to get to the last subway train. However, when I was moving down the stairs, before I could reach the platform, I saw someone

down here.

“It was a male. He was kneeling down on the ground and I saw the blood on the ground... en, I also smelled the scent of blood.

“I, I am a doctor who does surgeries. Therefore, I am very sensitive to the smell of blood.

“At first, I thought that someone was in trouble and may be in need of help. With that consideration in mind, I ran forward...

“Then, then I... I saw a terrifying scene...”

According to Dr Mu, he seemed to have borne witness to a scene of murder and had even witnessed part of the process.

He ran down the stairs and stepped onto the platform just in time to catch sight of the murderer as the murderer brutally killed the female victim.

No, more accurately speaking, what he saw was not the process of killing.

Rather... it was the dissection process!

In the beginning, he said that he saw a man kneeling in front of a woman – as the man had his back facing Dr Mu, he thought that someone was suddenly struck by an illness and was in need of help. As a doctor, he rushed forward – it had to be said, he was a courageous and upright person.

By the time Dr Mu arrived, the murderer had already cut open the female victim’s abdomen and cut out her internal organs, and thrown them around!

At that moment, Dr Mu became shocked.

Although he was a surgeon who had attended many dissection lessons in medical school and had witnessed many bloody scenes... seeing the scene of murder and the cruelty involved in the murderer’s methods of dissecting his female victims, his mind was shocked.

At the same time that Dr Mu arrived, the murderer ran away.

According to Dr Mu, when the murderer saw him come over, the murderer quickly ran away through the stairs.

“The murderer, how does he look like?”

Phoenix came over and crouched down before Dr Mu. She spoke in a very gentle voice and extended a slender hand to gently hold onto Dr Mu’s wrist.

This action from her caused the trembling Dr Mu to calm down somewhat. With a dazed look in his eyes, he raised his head and hesitated for a bit before saying. “He... seems to be wearing a grey coloured suit. He was wearing a hat... the suit seemed very old.”

A thought flashed through Chen Xiaolian’s mind and he glanced at Phoenix. He noticed a flicker of light in Phoenix’s eyes.

Grey coloured suit and hat...

That description sounded like the figure they saw after entering the subway station. The figure that had disappeared through a corner.

“We... we should... should report this to the police!” Dr Mu said after recollecting himself. Despite his trembling hands, he pulled out his mobile phone.

Chen Xiaolian thought it over and moved to hold down his hand. “Wait a minute.”

Dr Mu raised his head and looked at Chen Xiaolian with knitted brows. “Wait? For what? This is a homicide! Furthermore, this is an extremely brutal homicide! We need to report to the police immediately!”

Chen Xiaolian frowned. The insistence shown by Dr Mu was a very normal reaction for an ordinary person.

However... reporting to the police? Chen Xiaolian had no such thoughts.

Besides, this Dr Mu who was standing before him was clearly the ‘guide character’ stated by the system. How could he let Dr Mu go report this to the police?

“I must inform you, you have been sucked into a very special and

unusual case,” Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. “I will tell you about the specifics when the opportunity arises. But for now, the whole reporting to the police will have to be put aside for now.”

“Why?” Dr Mu’s eyes turned vigilant and he looked at Chen Xiaolian as his body shrank backward. “You... who are you people?”

Chen Xiaolian felt troubled.

If the guide character chose to be uncooperative, the situation would become more difficult.

“Do you need any help?” Phoenix who was right beside asked as she looked on cautiously.

Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Not at the moment. Could you please let me talk to him alone for a few minutes?”

Phoenix waved her hand and answered. “Go ahead.”

The young woman took the initiative to take a few steps back.

Chen Xiaolian stared at Dr Mu. He suddenly had an idea. “Can we talk?”

“... .. talk about what?”

“Do you remember what happened back in Hangzhou? Do you remember the heavy wounds you saw on my friend in Hangzhou?”

“Of course I remember,” Dr Mu appeared somewhat impatient as he asked. “What does that have to do with this?”

“Don’t be impatient, please let me finish,” Chen Xiaolian sighed. He looked carefully into Dr Mu’s eyes before slowly saying. “What if I tell you ... back in Hangzhou, those injuries, you did not make a misdiagnosis.”

Did not make a misdiagnosis?

Dr Mu’s eyes turned round and wide. “You mean...”

“The patient known as Da Gang, he had indeed suffered from grievous injuries. Your diagnosis of him was not wrong. Bone fractures, internal bleeding... those were not wrong. He was indeed in a life-threatening situation. However, later on... in just one night’s time, he was able to

make a huge recovery and could be successfully discharged. Don't you think there is something unusual about this situation?"

Dr Mu's expression became increasingly shocked.

Chen Xiaolian sighed. "We... are not ordinary humans."

"I do not understand what you mean!"

Chen Xiaolian scratched his head. "Do you read novels? Do you watch US dramas?"

"... .."

"Do you know about the X-Men? Have you watched the US drama 'Heroes'?"

Dr Mu's eyes grew even wider. "You, you mean to say..."

"We are not ordinary humans... that is what I meant," Chen Xiaolian said. Then, he flipped the palm of his hand.

Before his very eyes, Dr Mu watched as a handgun appeared in Chen Xiaolian's hand. With another flip, the handgun disappeared and a domineering looking war axe appeared in his hand!

"You..."

"All of us here are not ordinary humans... as for the murder case you see before you, it too is not an ordinary murder case," Chen Xiaolian slowly said. "I can only tell you this. We are here due to this case. Here to capture the murderer! As for reporting to the police... trust me when I say the police will not be able to do anything to the murderer."

"No...please wait a moment. Let me... let me gather my thoughts... my mind is confused," Dr Mu clutched his head.

"You should be able to believe this. You did witness for yourself the miraculous recovery of the patient in Hangzhou," Chen Xiaolian said slowly.

"I..." It was apparent that Dr Mu believed what he had said. Yet, common sense refused to let him accept this fact.

“All right. Listen up, Dr Mu. Right now, we need your help,” Chen Xiaolian held onto his wrist. He slowly sat down and said. “First, you are the first witness to this case! Second, you are an outstanding doctor. Now, there is something I need you to help out with.”

“Me?” Dr Mu’s eyes revealed confusion. “What can I do?”

Truth be told, Chen Xiaolian did not know what it was that Dr Mu could do.

However, since the system had designated him as the guide character, he must certainly be a useful character.

An idea occurred to Chen Xiaolian. “Right, you are a doctor! Can you help us examine the corpse? From a doctor’s professional point of view, help us examine the corpse and the scene.”

“Me?”

...

A few minutes later, a calmed down Dr Mu who had been coaxed by Chen Xiaolian finally decided to walk up to the side of the corpse.

After having put aside his fear toward the murderer, his professional expertise as a doctor came to the fore as he regarded the corpse – he was no longer feeling that fearful, nor was he feeling negative.

Faced with the bloody scene that was reminiscent of a slaughterhouse, one that nearly caused even Chen Xiaolian to vomit, Dr Mu took a deep breath and calmed down.

He took a few steps forward and crouched down beside the corpse.

“Do you have gloves? A plastic, surgical type.”

Hearing Dr Mu’s request, Chen Xiaolian was momentarily at a loss.

“Here.”

Phoenix who was beside, handed over a pair of gloves. Noting the puzzled expression on Chen Xiaolian’s face, the young woman gave a faint smile. “It’s always a good thing to be prepared.”

Dr Mu deftly slipped on the gloves. As he was extending his hand out toward the corpse, he hesitated and asked. "If I touch it, will it not destroy the crime scene?"

"It won't. Be at ease, you are helping out here!"

Dr Mu finally chose to trust him... or perhaps, he might still be partially dubious.

Still, he began to examine the body.

The whole process lasted for roughly seven or eight minutes. He even went around to examine the internal organs that were tossed about in the vicinity – this spectacle of a man going around, picking up those internal organs before examining them in detail left a rather terrifying feeling.

Chapter 186: Vengeful Spirit

After he was done, Dr Mu stood up, took a few steps backward, pulled off the gloves and threw them aside. He then accepted a bottle of water from Chen Xiaolian and took a few mouthfuls before seating himself onto the seats beside them. He breathed in and out a few times.

“Are you all right?”

“I’m good,” Despite the pale expression on Dr Mu’s face, he was able to remain fairly steady.

“What is the result of your examination?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

Dr Mu pondered for a moment before slowly saying.

“According the examination, the deceased is a woman. Her gender was apparent; there isn’t much fat beneath her skin, so, she should not be too old – since humans usually become fatter in their middle and later years. This happens because the elderly face a decrease in strength, causing them to have less exercise. This results in an accumulation of fat beneath their skin. Additionally, from the state of her breasts and ovaries, she should be in the prime of her life. I judge that she should be around 30 years old.

“Regarding fatal injuries... I found two spots. Obviously, since I am not a professional forensics personnel, and also the fact that I am lacking the necessary tools and equipment, there might be some omissions in this deduction of mine. There may be more fatal injuries and that I simply failed to locate them.

“At present, I can see two fatal injuries.

“The first is located on the neck where the point of entry is from the left side. It pierced in through the throat and into the artery.

“The second is located at the heart. It was done accurately; it was pierced in right in between the ribs.”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. “Is that it? Are there anything else?”

Dr Mu hesitated for a moment. It appeared that he had wanted to say something. However, there was hesitation on his part.

Chen Xiaolian was able to notice that and he slowly said. "Do not worry. Just speak whatever it is you can think of."

"This is only my personal deductions. Or perhaps, just my opinion. I do not want it to interfere with your work..."

"No, please speak your mind. We will only use it as a reference," Chen Xiaolian comforted him.

Dr Mu considered what to say. "How should I put it... I feel that this approach is... very familiar."

Familiar?

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

"What I meant by that is... I am a doctor," Dr Mu revealed a bitter smile. "I can't help but feel that the methods used appear doctor like. More accurately, only a skilled surgeon should be able to do this."

He then gestured with his hands. "You know, the human heart that is located on the left side of the chest is protected by ribs. To stab something into the heart in one go is not an easy feat. There is a high probability that the stab would end up striking the ribs. However, that is not the case with this situation. The murderer's stab pierced accurately through the gap between the ribs without touching the ribs and into the heart."

As Chen Xiaolian was considering Dr Mu's words, Phoenix's voice came from behind him. "However, that cannot prove that a doctor did it. It could be that the murderer is a very skilled professional killer."

"Naturally, such a possibility exists," As they were discussing matters within his field of profession, Dr Mu became much calmer and he was quick to reply. "I am simply pointing out some of my speculations. Besides the fatal wound on the heart, there are other indications as well. Due to those indications, I suspect that the murderer may have a high level of mastery in medical knowledge."

“Oh? Such as?”

“It’s the internal organs that were cut out and thrown to the side,” Dr Mu said. He forcefully shook his head and exhaled. “You may not understand me by words alone.”

Next, Dr Mu stepped forward again.

He moved until he was beside the internal organs strewn beside the corpse.

“Many of the internal organs for a human are placed closely together. For example, the liver and the gallbladder, the pancreas, spleen, stomach... those parts are all located very close to one another.

“I noticed that when the murderer was cutting open the abdomen, he cut out many of the internal organs and threw them out... I was unable to understand the reasoning behind this action of his.

“However, looking at the way the murderer operates, I had this feeling that the murderer’s methods were similar to that of a skilled surgeon.

“Because... generally speaking, only a surgeon would be so proficient toward internal organs and dissection techniques.

“You see, while the murderer was cutting out the internal organs... I have examined them and found that the liver and gallbladder are in a undamaged state! There are no traces of cuts on the surface of the liver at all.

“The same holds true for the spleen, pancreas, stomach sac and others.

“When I was examining the corpse, I found that the colon is also in a complete state. There are no cuts on it at all!

“You have to know this, when removing the liver and stomach sac... those two parts are located very close to the colon. That is especially true for the liver. Through my examination earlier, there are no cuts at all on them!

“The average people could not possibly be so skilled!

“This is not a matter of just picking up a knife to cut meat. Every

internal organ was cut out in a complete state where no damage was caused to the main parts! This is something very difficult to accomplish, something that ordinary people could not do!

“I am willing to bet. Ordinary people would not even be able to identify many of the parts!

“Additionally... if the murderer is really a surgeon. I will have to admit that this fellow’s expertise with the scalpel is higher than mine.

“I thought about it. If I had to be the one to do the dissection, I would not be able to guarantee that I could cut out so many internal organs without making a single mistake and cuts on the organs.”

Perhaps it was done by a doctor with a high level of mastery – well, that counts as a clue.

Chen Xiaolian noted that down.

“Also...” Dr Mu hesitated once more. However, he appeared to have figured something out – since he’d already said it, there was no need to refrain.

He took a deep breath. “The fatal injury on the deceased’s neck shows that the wound was inflicted from the left into the right.

“This could mean... the murderer may be left-handed and held the knife with his left hand. Or... I cannot be certain that he must certainly be a left-hander. However, the murderer is someone who can use his left hand. It is possible that the murderer is an ambidextrous person.”

All right!

A skilled surgeon who may be left-handed, or ambidextrous.

Chen Xiaolian looked at Dr Mu. “Is there anything else?”

Dr Mu reflected for a moment. “None at the moment.”

“Very well, thank you. You’ve helped us a lot.”

At that moment, Phoenix moved over with a handbag in her hand.

It was a very cheap and flashy handbag.

“This belongs to the deceased,” Phoenix said coolly. “I’ve inspected the contents of the handbag. There is a mobile phone, purse and...”

As she spoke, she furrowed her brows and opened the handbag to let Chen Xiaolian inspect the contents.

Glancing at it, Chen Xiaolian saw a cheap looking makeup kit, a small bottle of perfume and...

A long row of... condom packs!

“There is a lot of cash in the purse,” Phoenix frowned.

Considering the matter at hand, Chen Xiaolian came to understand Phoenix’s meaning.

In a developed country like Europe and the US, people rarely carry a great deal of cash with them. Especially now that money had gone paperless, most people would not carry much cash with them. Not only would that be inconvenient, it was also unsafe. The majority of the people would prepare the necessary amount beforehand and only bring some change with them.

Under most circumstances, those who would use cash. ... they were people involved in illegal transactions such as drug trafficking or...

Looking at the pile of condoms and the stacks of cash inside the purse...

Clearly, the deceased woman was highly likely a... sex worker, en, a prostitute [1].

“We... can we leave this place? I want to go back,” Dr Mu who was standing beside inquired. “Also, I think I should still...”

“You still want to report this to the police, right?” Chen Xiaolian turned his attention to Dr Mu.

Dr Mu did not say anything. However, his attitude and expression clearly stated everything.

Chen Xiaolian was not surprised – this was a normal reaction after all.

“I am sorry, Dr Mu. I cannot let you go away like this,” Chen Xiaolian

sighed. "You will have to come with us."

"... .. what?" Dr Mu became somewhat nervous. "You... you people cannot do this! You people do not have the right, I... I..."

Chen Xiaolian gripped his shoulder and said. "Believe me; this is for your sake!"

"No, I want to..."

Dr Mu tried to struggle.

It was at that instant...

Bang!

The sound alerted everyone who was standing on the platform.

A lamp that was located some distance away suddenly burst!

Before they could calm themselves...

Bang! Bang bang bang bang!

Bursting sounds rang out in succession! The lamps on the platform burst apart one after another. Soon, the entire platform was engulfed in darkness!

The first thing Chen Xiaolian did was to grab onto Dr Mu. He placed Dr Mu right beside himself. Lun Tai and Bei Tai quickly moved over and the three of them placed themselves around Dr Mu.

The platform had fallen into darkness!

In the darkness, Chen Xiaolian heard Phoenix's voice. "Do not panic, be quiet! Dagger, Monster, follow me. Titan brothers, watch our backs!"

Then, a cold breeze suddenly blew toward them from the distant rails.

When the cold breeze hit everyone's body, Chen Xiaolian felt a surge of cold air penetrating his entire body!

It felt as though he was standing within a world of ice and snow! The bone chilling cold spread through his body!

Goosebumps broke out throughout his body!

“Look! What is that?”

He heard Bei Tai’s voice.

Not far away, a faint green coloured speck abruptly appeared within the darkness.

The green coloured light began moving as it increased in size. It then came together...

To form a... translucent human figure!

It clearly had the shape of a woman. However, the figure was translucent and it fluttered about. Her legs could not be seen, and was instead a mass of chaos.

A sigh. It was as though the sound had entered through his ears and into his heart!

After that, a voice filled with vengeance rang out!

“Who? Who killed me? Who touched my body?!”

The translucent and illusory figure suddenly turned around.

Even in the darkness, Chen Xiaolian was able to accurately feel that the woman’s face, her eyes...

They were staring intently at him...

No!

It would be more accurate to say that they were staring intently at the one beside him... Dr Mu!

“Aah!”

A sharp and shrill scream rang out!

The sound was extremely harsh and brought with it a peculiar magic. It felt as though the sound had been magically transmitted into their ears! Chen Xiaolian, Lun Tai and Bei Tai felt pain in their eardrums. The feeling of pain even penetrated its way into their minds!

“It’s a ghost?” Lun Tai shouted loudly as he tightly clutched his ears.

It was then that the female ghost, whose eyes were staring intently at Dr Mu, suddenly revealed a grim and ferocious expression. She screeched and charged forward!

“Take him away!” Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate. He pushed Dr Mu to Lun Tai even as he summoned out the Fearless War Axe. He rushed forward to intercept the female ghost.

Head Cleaver!

His war axe drew an arc as it cleaved down toward the female ghost.

A cold flash accompanied this axe strike!

However, the war axe simply went through the female ghost! Without encountering any resistance, it whistled down.

At that same instant, Chen Xiaolian’s body, together with his war axe went pass the female ghost’s body!

In that same moment, Chen Xiaolian felt as though he had just charged through freezing cold water. The freezing feeling nearly suffocated him!

When he was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief, he came to realize that the female ghost had completely passed through his body.

Chen Xiaolian quickly turned around to see the female ghost pouncing toward Dr Mu.

Dr Mu was being pulled by Lun Tai as they ran away. They ran toward the top of the subway station.

Chen Xiaolian pulled out a handgun and fired!

Bang! Bang!

Two shots rang out but the bullets simply flew through the back of the female ghost before striking one of the pillars, causing sparks to fly!

The female ghost did not slow down and she continued to chase after Lun Tai and Dr Mu.

Bei Tai howled out. He tore out a seat that was fixed onto the side and hurled it forward. Unfortunately, the seat too struck thin air as it sailed

past the female ghost.

Ghost?

Chen Xiaolian's heart sank!

It would appear that their weapons and normal attacks would not work on ghosts!

Chen Xiaolian quickly reconsidered all the attacks within his arsenal.

If it's a ghost, it should be a spiritual entity.

However, against spiritual entities... both Lun Tai and Bei Tai's skills would have no effect. Lun Tai's skill is Muscle Fruit while Bei Tai's skill is Air Incarceration. These two skills can only affect material bodies. It would likely be of no use against spiritual entities!

As for me...

Maybe only... Bai Qi?

After he thought of that, Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment before making up his mind.

But before he could summon out Bai Qi...

Bang!

Another gunshot rang out!

Bang!

A silver coloured light exploded out behind the female ghost! The female ghost let out a miserable shriek!

Chen Xiaolian quickly turned around. Standing not far away from him was Phoenix!

Thanks to the faint green coloured light emanating off the female ghost, he was barely able to make out Phoenix's figure.

The young woman was standing straight. Next, she took a step forward, a big and unique looking revolver in her right hand. Her arm was straightened as she pointed the revolver at the female ghost. Then, she

pulled the trigger once more.

Bang!

This time, the silver light caused the female ghost's head to explode!

The female ghost turned around, her face a swirl of chaos. She roared out with resentment before her body collapsed apart and disappeared.

“I have my eyes on you! You will not escape me!”

After releasing the sharp and ear-piercing words, the figure of the female ghost completely dissipated.

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1 In the Qidian raws, the word prostitute is just **.

Chapter 187: Clues

“Are you all right?”

Phoenix snapped out a glow stick and held it as she walked over.

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes as he observed the unique looking revolver in Phoenix’s hand.

“Hmph, too amateurish. Not even equipping properly when entering an instance dungeon, the Meteor Rock Guild has fallen to such a low state. To think that you would actually use ordinary firearms against spirit entities.”

The ridiculing words came over from the side. The one who had spoken out was one of Phoenix’s team members, Dagger. His eyes revealed a look of disdain.

“Can I have a look at your weapon?” Chen Xiaolian furrowed his eyebrows but they quickly loosened and he asked.

Phoenix’s expression remained unchanging. She smiled and freely passed her gun over to him. “It’s simply an ordinary modified handgun. It’s been modified to have a bigger muzzle in order to be able to use special bullets.”

Chen Xiaolian accepted the gun. The fellow known as Dagger had seemingly wanted to say something. However, Phoenix threw him a look and he shut his mouth instead.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai returned while holding onto the terrified Dr Mu.

There was indeed nothing special with the revolver. It was clearly the result of modifying an ordinary firearm. The barrel and muzzle were specially made. Clearly, they were modified to accommodate the use of high-calibre bullets.

Chen Xiaolian popped out one of the bullets and inspected it. The middle part of the bullet revealed a faint silver colour.

“Specially made silver bullets,” Phoenix said coolly. “It has the ability to keep evil darkness type creatures at bay. It can also damage spirit entities. In the production process, silver and holy water is added to the bullet.”

“Holy water?” Chen Xiaolian smiled.

“That’s right. The type that you can get from ordinary churches,” Phoenix shrugged her shoulder. “Although this type of weapon is available in the Exchange System, creating this type of weapon would help save up on points.”

“True,” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

“This modified weapon, the damage it deals toward darkness-type creatures will be slightly lower than that available in the Exchange System. However, it is good enough,” Phoenix threw a glance at Chen Xiaolian. “You... probably haven’t encountered darkness-type creatures before, right?”

“You can say that,” Chen Xiaolian did not hide it. Rather than slapping his face to look imposing, he might as well speak the truth [1]. Besides, his performance earlier had already exposed him.

“Against creatures of darkness... as long as they are part of the darkness-type creatures spoken of in Western legends, the weapons that work against them are generally these items mentioned in Western legends. Holy water, the cross and silver objects.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at the young woman before him. Then, he suddenly smiled. “What about garlic? I recall that garlic is the best when dealing with vampires from Western legends.”

Phoenix laughed out uncontrollably and answered. “I do not know. I have never used garlic before. However... it might be useful. You can give it a try next time. But I do not like the smell of those things.”

They then left the subway station and were soon outside. They did not stay there long and chose to leave – after the commotion within the subway station, only Heaven knew if the police might come over.

Time was running out and Chen Xiaolian had no desire to waste time by dealing with the police.

Dr Mu appeared to have calmed down considerably – back then, it was possible that he may have had some doubts toward Chen Xiaolian's words before and his cooperative actions before may have been due to the danger he felt from the number of people on Chen Xiaolian's side.

However, after the emergence of the female ghost, Dr Mu became a complete believer! Despite the fact that he was a doctor and a firm atheist, personally witnessing the lights getting blown up in the subway station and the appearance of the female ghost who could pass through human bodies... when that kind of scene was served right before his face, he could not help but believe in it.

At night, the streets of the East area was very quiet. It was possible that this was a normal situation for this place, but it was also possible that this was the setting by the system. Chen Xiaolian was not interested in pursuing the answer to that question.

After they arrived at the street, they quickly left. While they were leaving, a conflict nearly occurred.

The members of the Coffeehouse Guild and especially the one known as Dagger requested to have Dr Mu follow them in their car. Naturally, Chen Xiaolian was unwilling – this was the system's guide character after all!

Apparently, this Dagger fellow had a disagreeable temperament. He sneered without reservation. "Back then, our Guild Leader was the one who dealt with the vengeful spirit! What qualifications do you have to take the guide character?"

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He merely looked at the other party coldly. Bei Tai had a rubbed his fists and wiped his palms and he firmly shouted back [2]. "If you want to take him by force, you can give it a try."

At that moment, Phoenix spoke up.

"That is enough, Dagger. Stop your dispute," Phoenix walked forward

until she was before Chen Xiaolian. She glanced at him. “This gentleman here can get into your car. However, our car will be following behind you. We’ll look for a place where we can discuss things over and figure out how to cooperate to complete this quest. How about it?”

Seeing the sincerity in her eyes, Chen Xiaolian exhaled. “All right... thank you for just now.”

Phoenix smiled. “Naturally, I have a condition. My principle is that since we are cooperating, we must do something to build trust between us.”

“Hmm?”

Phoenix spoke coolly. “Pick one of your guild members and have him get into our car.”

Chen Xiaolian immediately narrowed his eyes as he regarded Phoenix. “Hostage?”

Phoenix smiled. “An exchange. I will get into your car, alone.”

This proposal seemed very fair. Additionally, it also appeared very sincere. Thus, Chen Xiaolian could find no reason to reject it.

Lun Tai looked at his brother before turning to look at Chen Xiaolian. “Guild Leader, I will go.”

Chen Xiaolian became silent before nodding his head. “All right.”

Bei Tai was too reckless. With Lun Tai’s calm and cautious nature, Chen Xiaolian would feel more at ease in letting him go.

“What are we waiting for? Let’s hop in the car,” Phoenix then turned toward her team members. “I am going to ride in their car... Dagger, Monster! And you Titan brothers... be polite toward our guest, be courteous.”

Dagger sneered and turned around to get into the driver’s seat of their car. The monkey who was seated by Monster’s neck smiled stiffly. Monster then took the initiative to open the door to the car’s back seat and made a rather friendly gesture for Lun Tai to enter.

Despite never having driven a right-hand-drive car, Chen Xiaolian forced himself forward and he took to the driver's seat. Phoenix took the initiative to seat herself on the first passenger seat. As for Bei Tai and Dr Mu, they sat behind.

"There is a small public square nearby. At a time like this, the place should be very quiet and devoid of any disturbance. We can go over there and discuss what to do next," Phoenix turned on her mobile phone's gps and pointed out the location.

Chen Xiaolian did not object.

Their two cars moved out. One in the front and the other at the back, they moved out of the Whitechapel area.

Chen Xiaolian's driving speed was not fast. Phoenix, who was seated beside him, appeared interested in him. She kept regarding Chen Xiaolian with peculiar looking eyes.

"Do you like to look at others this way?" Chen Xiaolian became rather uncomfortable at being stared at by her.

"You seem very young. If I have to guess, you should not be older than eighteen years old, right? Hmm... could you be sixteen years old?" Phoenix smiled.

Chen Xiaolian did not reply.

"It's rare to see a Guild Leader as young as you. Moreover, you are also the Guild Leader of Meteor Rock Guild. That is a rather well known guild."

"You are quite young yourself," Chen Xiaolian replied coolly.

Phoenix did not say anything. Instead, she rolled down the windows and allowed the cool night wind to blow inside.

After some time had passed, Phoenix replied. "My circumstance is different from yours."

Chen Xiaolian was dumbfounded – isn't this woman taking too long to think?

“How is it different?”

“Your team members appear to have a good relationship with you,” Phoenix turned her head around to glance at Bei Tai who was seated behind. She smiled and said. “Mr, can you relax? I will not eat you.”

Bei Tai muttered something and shut his mouth after that.

“Could it be that the relationship between you and your team members are not that good?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“It’s all right,” Phoenix gave a faint smile and pointed toward the street before them. She suddenly said. “Turn left in front!”

Chen Xiaolian furrowed his eyebrows. “The address that you mentioned is not this...”

“Turn left!”

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment. Then, he followed her instructions and turned. Next, he acquiesced Phoenix’s request to stop the car by the street beside a small supermarket. The supermarket was one that opened for 24 hours. Phoenix hastily said. “Wait for me for a few minutes.” Then, she jumped out of the car and rushed into the supermarket.

A while later, Chen Xiaolian watched as the young woman pranced out of the supermarket. She pranced across the street, one hand holding onto a can of pomegranate juice as she slowly sipped it using a straw.

“You... because of this, you made me turn the car and stop here?” Chen Xiaolian stared with bulging eyes.

There was a smile in Phoenix’s eyes as she too smiled like a girl. “Why not?”

Seeing the dissatisfaction in Chen Xiaolian’s eyes, Phoenix laughed. “Don’t be so nervous. Even if we are participating in an instance dungeon, we must still enjoy ourselves. If we do not, then what is the point?”

After saying that, she handed over a can of pomegranate juice. “Here you go.”

“... thanks. But, I do not like to drink these things,” Chen Xiaolian shook his head.

“I like drinking pomegranate juice the most,” Phoenix held onto her drink, an expression of utter satisfaction on her face.

“Are you done messing around? If you are, can we move?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

Their car roared to life again and moved away.

Phoenix, who kept drinking the pomegranate juice suddenly asked. “How much do you know about Jack the Ripper’s case?”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

In the back seat, Dr Mu had been silent, not uttering a single noise. It was as though he had yet to recover from the shock that he had just experienced. Hearing their conversation, Dr Mu suddenly spoke up. “What did you say? Jack the Ripper?”

“Yes, do you have any questions?” Phoenix smiled.

“You are talking... about the serial murderer in the history of UK?” Dr Mu asked.

“Unless you know of a second Jack the Ripper,” Phoenix shrugged her shoulders.

“You... ..” Dr Mu suddenly shouted. “You people can’t possibly be thinking that this case is committed by Jack the Ripper, are you? Please! That happened a hundred years ago! How could the murderer live that long?”

“Many things should be impossible,” Phoenix maintained the girlish smile on her face as she replied. “I’m willing to bet that you have never met a ghost before, right?”

Dr Mu was left speechless.

“Right, can I ask something? I have been curious about something since earlier... do you know each other before this?” Phoenix turned to Chen Xiaolian.

“Something along those lines,” Chen Xiaolian was aware that he could not hide it. Thus, he slowly explained his relationship with Dr Mu to her. “To think that he would be the guide character. That surprised me too. He... is a doctor, and an ordinary person.”

Here, Chen Xiaolian cast a glance at Dr Mu. “If I may, Dr Mu, why are you here in London?”

“I...” Dr Mu’s face turned nervous. “I came here to participate in an activity.”

“Activity? Can you give us the details?” Phoenix’s expression suddenly turned serious. She turned around to face Dr Mu.

Dr Mu hesitated for a moment. Then, he answered.

“I am a doctor. At the same time, I am also a PhD postgraduate for XX Hospital. Last year, I published a medical thesis. More accurately, it was one I jointly published with my instructor. Originally, nothing much happened with the thesis. However, one of my friends in one of UK’s hospital saw it and inadvertently shared it with some of his other colleagues. After reviewing it, they felt that some of the points forwarded in the thesis were quite interesting. Thus, we were invited to come together to discuss the matter.

“However, this discussion is neither a formal activity nor a formal academic discussion. Thus, my instructor had no interest in it... so...”

“So, he sent you over?” Phoenix looked at Dr Mu with pity in her eyes.

Chen Xiaolian could not help himself but cast a glance at him as well.

From the words he had spoken, it was not hard to deduce some matters.

There was no need to ask about it. The thesis was mostly written by Dr Mu. However... he had jointly published it with his instructor... this was also one of the hidden rules common to their country’s academic community.

If this were either a formal or an official discussion held in some high-class seminar hall, Dr Mu would have no chance to come. The instructor

would have personally come over.

However, this was a nameless private invitation for a private discussion that would contribute to zero promotion of reputation and influence. Thus, Dr Mu's instructor showed no interest and sent him instead as filler.

As he was considering that, Chen Xiaolian suddenly thought of something. "Back then, when we were talking about Jack the Ripper, your reaction seemed very big. Why? Merely because it was a case that happened over a hundred years ago?"

"Err... no, I just think it's too much of a coincidence."

"Coincidence?" Chen Xiaolian could not help himself and he exchanged glances with Phoenix who was seated beside him. They were able to see traces of excitement within each other's eyes.

"Err... the friend who invited me over graduated from the Royal College of Medicine and now works in the forensics field... he is also a member of the Forensics Association. En, before this, we would often communicate through the internet to discuss about Jack the Ripper's case. En, additionally... the thesis paper I published contained some speculations made based on a medical perspective. He felt that it was interesting; thus, he invited me over to discuss it through. Several of his colleagues were also interested in discussing this with me. This time, my travel cost to UK was paid for by him."

Gazhi!

Chen Xiaolian's foot stamped down on the brake!

Their car immediately came to a halt in the middle of the street!

The first thing that came to his mind was: Clue! This must be a clue given by the system!

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1 'Slapping oneself to look more imposing' means to try to do or be

something you are not.

2 'Rubbing one's fists and wiping one's palms' means the putting on an eager and excited expression, usually before a fight breaks out.

Chapter 188: Photo

Both Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix shared the same line of thought.

“Can you... tell us what your views are on Jack the Ripper?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

Dr Mu appeared rather cautious. “I... actually do not know much about Jack the Ripper’s case. However... the thesis papers I wrote in school is about gene mutation. En, also known as the change in genetics. Generally speaking, cells of ordinary life forms would replicate itself accurately. However, this steady process is relative. Under certain conditions, the genes can suddenly transform into another form of existence, different from its original one. That is, at a certain location, a new gene appears suddenly, replacing the original gene, causing the gene to become a mutant gene ...”

Seeing that Dr Mu was about to start a long-winded explanation, Chen Xiaolian quickly halted him. “Stop!”

He smiled wryly. “Dr Mu, there is no need to elaborate into the professional type of specifics. Even if you do, we won’t be able to understand.”

“Hehe,” Dr Mu gave an embarrassed smile – clearly, he was quite the bookworm at heart. He scratched his head before continuing, “Let me put it this way, gene mutation is something that is very common within biological life forms and could happen at any time. The subject of my thesis papers is related to this.”

“What does that have to do with Jack the Ripper?” Phoenix quietly regarded Dr Mu.

“About that... ..” Dr Mu considered how to answer her question.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly spoke up, “I think I remember. I saw some of the information regarding Jack the Ripper before.”

“You’ve seen it before?”

“Yesterday, before the instance dungeon opened, I checked out some of

the historical information of London. With how famous Jack the Ripper is, how could I miss it?" Chen Xiaolian smiled bitterly.

Pausing, he continued in a serious manner, "At present, there is no consensus on Jack the Ripper's identity. En, this is not quite accurate. There is a main stream of thinking where there is a relatively acceptable deduction.

"In the information that I've gone through, back in 2014, international DNA experts used DNA testing to deduce the identity of the murderer.

"Back when the police was investigating the identity of the murderer, they listed hundreds of possible suspects. One of them is Aaron Kosminski.

"He is a Jewish Polish person.

"According to the most widespread deduction, most people believe that he is Jack the Ripper.

"Back then, the police had managed to acquire some of the stuff that the murderer left behind. There was no such technology back then; however, in 2014, some experts in DNA analysis believed that the murder scene has the murderer's... err..."

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian could not restrain himself but glance at Phoenix. He hesitated for a moment before continuing, "The murder scene has the murderer's..."

"What?"

"It is said that it is his semen."

Phoenix was taken off guard. Her charming face became flushed. However, she quickly calmed down. "Then?"

Chen Xiaolian became somewhat distressed. "It is said that... in one of the murder scene, there was the murderer's semen beside the murdered female victim. Thus... this became a very important piece of evidence.

"A hundred years ago, the technology to identify it does not exist. Presently however, such a technology does exist.

“Thus, in 2014, some DNA analysis experts carried out an analysis on it.

“The results of the analysis revealed... the semen left by the murderer matches the DNA of the suspect known as Aaron Kosminski.

“And so, it was claimed that Aaron Kosminski is Jack the Ripper from back then... although the case happened over a hundred years ago and Aaron Kosminski had also died over a hundred years ago...

“This conclusion became widely accepted. At present, many of the information I found shows that there is a high possibility that Aaron Kosminski is Jack the Ripper. But...”

“But what?” Phoenix asked.

“However, this matter was not recognized by the police,” Chen Xiaolian shrugged his shoulders.

He sighed and carefully recalled the information that he had read.

“First, the deceased is a prostitute. The suspect, Aaron Kosminski and the deceased both live near Whitechapel area. This may be a reason to suspect him. However... because the deceased is a prostitute, it was only normal to have some semen appear beside her... perhaps the semen was something her client left behind. Perhaps Aaron Kosminski had patronized her before she was killed...

“According to the police, the semen came from a scarf left behind by the deceased’s body.

“However, that does not prove that the semen belongs to the murderer. It could be from her ordinary clients. Aaron Kosminski may be that unlucky client.”

Phoenix’s face turned slightly red. She put on a façade of calmness and asked, “And?”

“Second, the life of Aaron Kosminski does not match Jack the Ripper’s modus operandi.

“The fellow known as Aaron Kosminski is an unfortunate fellow. He is a poor fellow who lived near Whitechapel. At the time, that place was the

slums area of London.

“We have seen the scene before. Dr Mu had also said it.

“The murderer is likely a very skilled surgeon who is very knowledgeable about the human body and very skilled in the use of knives.

“You know, Jack the Ripper appeared in 1888... in that era, those who can study in the field of medicine were, at the very least, not poor. A skilled surgeon with a good grasp of internal organs should at least have some social status. That person ... should not be living in the slums near Whitechapel.

“Clearly, this Aaron Kosminski does not meet this condition.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian’s thoughts cleared up and he quickly continued.

“The third point was more suspicious. According to the records, Aaron Kosminski was a patient suffering from serious mental illness.

“He suffers from a considerable degree of mania and paranoia.

“Just now, we have just seen the murder scene... the murder scene at the time should be almost the same as what we saw.

“Just think about it, how can someone suffering from mania and paranoia be so calm as to accurately cut out the internal organs. That is an action that requires a considerable amount of composure and psychological character.

“As for Aaron Kosminski, he clearly did not have this... because he was a manic patient.”

Phoenix quietly considered it for a while, then she slowly said, “It sounds very reasonable. However... what about the results of the DNA testing?”

“For that, we will have to ask Dr Mu.”

Hearing that, Dr Mu nodded his head. “Indeed, I have heard about those things from my friends as well. The results of the DNA testing is what I

wrote about in my thesis papers.

“We believe that there is a high possibility that a mistake was made during the DNA testing conducted in 2014.”

“Oh?”

“According to the results from the 2014 DNA testing, the semen on the scarf left beside the deceased showed a gene mutation. This gene mutation is very rare and the scientific community refer to it as...”

Seeing that Dr Mu was about to enter a lengthy explanation again, Phoenix quickly interrupted, “Wait. There is no need to go into the professional terms. Dr Mu... please, explain it to us in layman terms.”

“Err... all right,” Dr Mu thought about it. He raised both his hands and said. “Simply put, in the analysis of the semen on the scarf, they believed that a gene mutation had occurred. Let’s call it gene mutation A.

“According to the field of scientific research, this gene mutation A is a very rare occurrence.

“However, I think that this is a mistake on the part of the scientific perspective. This gene mutation is not rare... rather, many people have it confused with another gene mutation, gene mutation B.

“Truthfully, the results of my findings may prove that the gene mutation of the semen actually belongs to gene mutation B. This mutation is very common among Europeans, with a general rate of over 90 %.

“Therefore, the result of the analysis that utilized the gene mutation to prove that Aaron Kosminski was Jack the Ripper appears to have been overturned.”

Hearing that, Phoenix spoke out, “In other words... first, it cannot be proven that the semen left on the scarf belongs to Aaron Kosminski. Second, even if it was left by him, it still cannot prove that Aaron Kosminski is Jack the Ripper.”

“Right. That’s about it.”

Phoenix frowned, "If that is the case. Doesn't that mean... we do not have any clues?"

Dr Mu thought about it and suddenly said. "If it's about Jack the Ripper's case... maybe that friend of mine would know more. He is a member of the Forensics Association. He is usually very interested in researching historical cases. He seems to have done a lot of research on this case... so..."

Chen Xiaolian looked at the Phoenix, then turned to face Dr Mu. "It seems that we will need to visit this friend of yours."

...

Paying someone a visit at three o'clock in the morning was clearly not a polite thing to do.

Thus, when Colombo was awakened by the knocking sounds on the door, he moved to open the door in a bleary-eyed state while mouthing out a string of expletives.

However, before he opened the door, he suddenly jolted awake.

He was living in a high-class apartment! The access system downstairs was very tight. How could someone directly come upstairs to find him?

He quickly reached for an 8 iron (golf) that was placed by the door.

Then, he cautiously shouted out. "Who is it outside?"

"Colombo! It's me!"

Colombo looked out through the peephole and let out a breath of relief.

The one standing outside the corridor was his friend, Dr Mu who came from the East. Although they have not met up for years, he would not be mistaken about Dr Mu's appearance.

"Damn it!" Colombo grumbled as he opened the door. "My friend, are you mad... why did you come running over at this bloody hour? And how did you get up here? Didn't the guards outside stop you? I should file a complaint about them; they are being too unprofessional..."

After unlocking the door, he opened the door. However, the moment a small gap opened up, Colombo suddenly felt the door being pushed open and several people swarmed inside!

The first to enter was Lun Tai.

Lun Tai forced open the door and Colombo exclaimed. Colombo quickly stepped backward while the golf club in his hand had already been snatched away.

“Stop shouting, we are not going to harm you,” Phoenix walked in next.

“Colombo, I am sorry. Sorry for disturbing you so late in the night. However, you can be at ease. They are neither thieves nor gangsters,” Dr Mu was clearly feeling sorry for what was happening. He quickly went over to embrace his old friend. “Do not worry, they mean you no harm. Additionally... you will be welcoming us soon.”

“The Hell! Mu! If you cannot give me a reason, I will immediately report this to the police!” Colombo was like an agitated cat as he carefully backed away. He watched as many others entered his living room.

Phoenix’s team member, Monster was the last to enter through the door. He closed the door and locked it. The monkey on his shoulder chattered a few times before climbing onto the cabinet next to the door.

“You, you fellows... just who are you people? Mu! Damn it! What is going on here?”

Colombo’s expression was livid.

“All right, everyone, spread out... do not encircle the owner,” Phoenix smiled as she walked over. Her team members dispersed and found a spot in the living room to either sit or stand. The fellow known as Dagger had attracted Colombo’s attention the most... he had many daggers strapped onto his arm and he stood vigilantly by the window – a glance was enough for him to feel that Dagger was not a good person!

“Don’t panic, Colombo,” Dr Mu wringed his arms. “We came here looking for you due to something important!”

“Considering our friendship, I will give you only one minute, Mu!” Colombo’s expression was ugly to behold. “In one minute, if you cannot give me an acceptable explanation, then, our friendship will be over! You people must leave as well! Don’t think I am afraid, the one living upstairs is a friend of mine. He is a police officer in London!”

Hearing his last sentence, Chen Xiaolian could not help but let out a smile.

He stepped forward and spoke in a very polite tone, “Colombo? Hello, my name is Chen Xiaolian. I am a friend of Dr Mu and I came from the same place as him. The reason we are disturbing you at such a late hour is because, according to Dr Mu, you are someone who had spent a lot of time researching Jack the Ripper’s case...”

“What about it?” Colombo shouted. “The Hell? At such a late hour... you came to my house in order to discuss a case that happened a hundred years ago? Can’t you visit me during the day?”

Chen Xiaolian was able to understand his argument.

Even if he loved something and made it into a hobby... he was not willing to be dragged out from his bed in the middle of the night by a group of strangers just to discuss about it.

“Before you get angry, can you please look at something?”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian glanced at Phoenix. She pulled out a mobile phone; opening it, she handed it over to Colombo.

The mobile phone contained photos that Phoenix had taken when she was inspecting the corpse at the scene of murder.

Colombo grumbled with discontent as he accepted the mobile phone. After glancing at it however, his entire body reacted in a manner that appeared as though he was struck by lightning.

“Oh, my God!” Colombo’s hand turned limp and the mobile phone nearly fell to the ground. Gripping onto the mobile phone, he slumped down onto the sofa. His eyes stared intently upon the photos within the mobile phone. With trembling hands, he fidgeted with the photos. After

looking through to the last few pictures...

“This, this, this is ...” Colombo’s voice shuddered. “You people... did you get these pictures from some movie set?”

“You specialize in the area of forensics,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “Could you not differentiate between a prop and a real internal organ?”

“I...” Colombo’s lips trembled and his face grew paler. “Bu... but... this...”

He suddenly took a deep breath. “You... did you people get hold of some old photos from the police archives and use the latest technology to process it before letting me view it?”

“I assure you, these few pictures are fresh. They were just recently taken!” Phoenix slowly said.

“Impossible!” Colombo jumped up, his eyes bulging widely. “Recently taken?”

“About less than an hour ago,” Dr Mu said with a grim expression.

“Oh... my God!” Colombo’s face turned twisted. “How... how could this... could... could it be? Another Jack the Ripper has appeared in London?”

—

Colombo. Raw: ‘柯伦波’, pinyin: ‘kē lún bō’.

Chapter 189: Conflict

Colombo was once again slumped down onto the sofa. Although he was only in his pyjamas, the heating in the room was sufficient for him.

However, cold sweat suddenly appeared upon his forehead.

The imagery within the photos was undoubtedly very bloody, very cruel and very terrible.

However, as a professional in the field of forensics, Colombo's reaction was better than Dr Mu's back then.

His face gradually turned green and pale.

Suddenly, he jumped up, threw the mobile phone on the table, turned and ran into the toilet by the room.

It was not long before they heard the sounds of vomiting coming out from the toilet.

"I thought... I didn't think that a forensics expert would be so delicate," said Chen Xiaolian as he smiled wryly.

Chen Xiaolian signalled Lun Tai with his eyes. Lun Tai immediately entered the toilet and helped Colombo out from the toilet.

"I... can I get a change of clothes please?" said Colombo. He appeared to be in an unsteady state.

"Of course, this is your house," answered Chen Xiaolian who then gave a faint smile.

The fellow turned around and entered a room. Not long after, he walked out, having changed into a new pair of long trousers and a sweater.

His emotional state appeared to have improved somewhat. He said, "Gentlemen! This is not a small matter! I would like to ask... these pictures..."

"They were taken from the murder scene," Dr Mu quickly said. "I... may be the first witness."

“You... you were at the scene?”

“Yes.”

“You saw the corpse... I mean, the scene within the photos...”

“They’re the same,” Dr Mu’s face was extremely pale. “Moreover... it seems highly probable that I might have caught sight of the murderer!”

“Oh, my God!” Colombo shuddered. He abruptly raised his head to look at them all. “I need to ask... you people, did you people report this to the police?”

“... ..” Dr Mu did not say anything.

“Wait!” Colombo exclaimed. “Mu! Don’t tell me that you did not report something so serious to the police? Are you people crazy? You need to report this immediately! Oh, Hell! You people did not by chance run over here right after leaving the murder scene? I am a forensics expert! Not a police!”

“Don’t panic,” said Chen Xiaolian. He pulled over a chair and sat himself opposite of Colombo. “Please calm down first.”

“Calm down? Who are you?” Colombo frowned as he regarded Chen Xiaolian. “Kid, this is no joking matter!”

Ah... kid?

The corners of Chen Xiaolian’s lips twitched... unfortunately, with his age, he lacked the ability to persuade others.

“Listen up, Mr,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly. “Please listen carefully to the things that I will be saying next. I also ask that you temporarily stop viewing me as a child. Can you do that?”

Colombo furrowed his eyebrows.

At that moment, Dagger, who was standing by the window suddenly interrupted in an impatient and frosty tone, “Why are you spouting so much nonsense? Don’t you know that time is limited? Idiot!”

It appeared that he was not able to bear with it any longer. He suddenly

walked over, pulled out a dagger with his hand and directed it at Colombo. He spat out viciously, “Now is not the time for you to ask questions! We need your cooperation! Understand? You better be obedient...”

“What are you doing!” Chen Xiaolian’s face warped and he immediately stood up, placing himself before Dagger. “Put down your knife!”

“What did you say?” Dagger replied with widened eyes, hostility exuding out from his face. “You fledgling rookie! Do you even know how to get through an instance dungeon? What is the point of talking nonsense with an ordinary person? Use the fastest method to get the information we need! That is all we should do!”

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath. He stared at him with a cold expression on his face and said, “I will count to three. Put down the knife and step back!”

“Hah!” said Dagger. He raised his eyebrows and directed his dagger at Chen Xiaolian. “Make me!”

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai were already standing by Chen Xiaolian’s side. Bei Tai furiously retorted, “You bitch! Show our Guild Leader some respect!”

“A bunch of trash!” Dagger harrumphed. “Come on. I would like to see how strong you are!”

Monster was standing before the door as he coldly looked at Chen Xiaolian and his team. As for the Titan brothers, they were occupying the left and right side of the living room.

It appeared that the Chen Xiaolian and his team had been surrounded.

The atmosphere was tense and could explode at any moment!

“Enough!”

Phoenix suddenly shouted out.

She suddenly got up. She walked forward until she was standing before Dagger. She placed one hand onto Dagger’s wrist and forced it down.

With a calm look on her face, she asked, “Dagger, did I say you could pull out your dagger?”

“... ..” Dagger’s eyelids twitched as he looked at Phoenix. His eyes exuded dissatisfaction, yet he dared not speak up.

“I am asking you a question here,” Phoenix slowly repeated. “Did I say you could pull out your dagger... did I?”

“... .. no,” The word hissed out through the gaps in his teeth.

“Since I, the Guild Leader, have yet to give you the command, what makes you think you can act in such a rash manner?” Phoenix’s tone lightened. However, despite the lightened tone of voice, a light flared out from her eyes.

Dagger forcefully gritted his teeth.

“Although I have said this many times before in recent days, I will reiterate this once more,” said Phoenix as she stared into Dagger’s eyes. “You need to control your emotions, Dagger! Also... if you want to be the leader and give orders, then... please wait until after I am dead. Can you do that?”

Dagger’s face twisted for an instant. Then, he quickly lowered his eyelids. He exhaled and whispered, “I am sorry... Guild Leader.”

Phoenix personally sent a look at each of her team members. The Titan brothers turned back toward their respective corners while Monster went back to the door. The monkey that was on the cabinet climbed up to his shoulder. It then chattered out a few times.

“All right, gentlemen. Please calm down,” said Phoenix. She turned around and cast a pleasant gaze at Chen Xiaolian. “We are still cooperating together.”

Chen Xiaolian took a profound gaze at the young woman and frowned. He replied, “All right. We are indeed still cooperating together. However... I think that some people should restrain themselves.”

Dagger snorted. He walked to the window and directed his gaze outside.

“Well then, since that issue’s solved, we should get down to business,” said Phoenix. She clapped her hands and asked, “Mr Colombo, do you have coffee in your house?”

“... yes...” Colombo answered subconsciously. Then, he suddenly shouted out, “What were you thinking of doing just now? Damn it! Were you thinking of threatening me? You need to get out of my house right now! At once! Immediately! This instant! Otherwise, I will report to the police! I... I...”

Chen Xiaolian felt troubled. He threw a dirty look at Dagger’s back and turned around. He did his best to put on a pleasant face as he faced Colombo and spoke, “I am sorry...”

“I do not want your apology! I want you to leave my house right now!” Colombo was thoroughly enraged.

Dr Mu opened his mouth, “Colombo, I am really sorry...”

“F**k you!” Colombo swore. “You scram too!”

Chen Xiaolian was able to understand what Colombo was currently feeling.

A group of people, led by his own friend barged into his house in the middle of the night. Then, one of them actually pulled out a dagger to threaten him... regardless of who it may be, they would still be outraged.

“You need to calm down,” Chen Xiaolian sighed.

Son of a bitch! Things were going so well, but now, we’ll have to become the bad guys.

He signalled Lun Tai and Bei Tai with his eyes. Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai moved to the left and right side respectively and held Colombo. Then, they pushed him down onto the sofa.

Although Colombo had quite the firm body, how could his pitiful strength compare with the two brothers? Thus, he was forced to sit down on the sofa.

“Mr, I really did not want to be rude,” said Chen Xiaolian as he sat down

opposite of him. “Additionally, you are also Dr Mu’s friend. Since Dr Mu is a friend of mine... I do not wish to offend you.”

As he spoke, Chen Xiaolian slowly pulled out a gun. He then placed the gun on the table.

This action of his left Colombo terrified.

“No no, you, you ...”

“Be at ease, I will not harm you,” Chen Xiaolian said. The expression on his face was very sincere. However, tens of thousands of ‘motherf**ker’ words stampeded through his mind... this senior is being forced to be a wicked bastard argh!

“You, what exactly do you want from me!” Colombo who was clearly frightened asked.

“It’s about this case, we need your professional opinion,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said.

“Case... ah right!” Colombo suddenly recalled about it. “You should report to the police! Understand? That is a very serious murder case! You have to report it and let the police deal with it! You shouldn’t come find me! I am just a forensics...”

“This is not an ordinary case,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. He raised his head to look at Dr Mu. “I think that it would be better for you to explain things to him.”

Dr Mu sighed and he sat down. He picked up Phoenix’s mobile phone and reopened the photos before placing them in front of Colombo.

“My friend... perhaps, you are feeling very angry and furious at this moment. However, please finish listening to what I have to say. Even if after this... even if you do not want to recognize me as a friend after this, for now, I really need your help.”

“... ...” Colombo fixed a complicated gaze at Dr Mu.

After that, Dr Mu began to narrate his story.

...

Ten minutes later, Dr Mu finished narrating his story. Colombo stared at him with a dazed expression on his face. It took a long time before he could recollect himself.

“My... my ears must be playing tricks on me. Or... Mu, have you gone cuckoo? Or have every one of you here gone bonkers?”

Colombo mumbled, “The Hell... Jack the Ripper from over a hundred years ago... the same murder case is happening at this time period? And it is happening in Whitechapel as well?”

“Bloody Hell! You are telling me you actually encountered a ghost?”

“The deceased transformed into a ghost? Bloody Hell! Damn! That is impossible! I am a doctor! There is no such thing as a ghost in this world!”

Colombo was manic about disbelieving it...

“No such thing? Impossible?” Phoenix suddenly laughed out. She stepped forward and walked until she was before Colombo. She said, “Mr, please watch me carefully.”

Colombo turned his attention toward her. He became stunned, his eyes widened and his mouth was left gaping!

Phoenix she was floating in front of him!

The young woman’s feet hovered thirty cm above the floor.

Hovering in the middle of the air!

“You you you you you... ..”

“There are many things in this world that you do not know about,” Phoenix said while smiling coolly. Then, she descended upon the floor. “Now that you’ve seen something that you have never believed in before... since you have seen it for yourself, then... I will tell you this; everything that Dr Mu had told you earlier is the truth. We are not lying to you.”

“... Oh God, oh God...”

...

Chapter 190: Repeating Storyline

Phoenix's actions and words left Colombo shocked.

While it was possible for him to distrust things that he had merely heard, this was something that was happening right before his very eyes. Even if he wanted to deny it, he could not!

"Do you need a cup of coffee?" asked Chen Xiaolian. Watching the poor Colombo, Chen Xiaolian could not help but feel sympathetic toward him.

"Coffee? No no no... that's not what I need, I need, I need something else."

He trembled as he climbed up from the sofa and moved toward the wine cabinet. He retrieved a bottle of whiskey and poured a small cup for himself and gulped it down in one go. Due to his hastiness in finishing the cup, he ended up coughing a few times. He turned around to stare at Phoenix for a bit. Then, he turned his head back and poured himself another cup before gulping it down.

He calmed down somewhat after that.

Chen Xiaolian spent the next few minutes comforting Colombo. He used the same thing he said to Dr Mu to bluff Colombo.

A few minutes later, Colombo blinked as he looked at Chen Xiaolian. "...so, what you mean to say is, you people are not ordinary humans? You people are... superhumans? Meta humans? Heavens, if not for the fact that I am seeing it for myself, I would have believed that this is a Hollywood movie."

"You have seen it for yourself," Chen Xiaolian shrugged his shoulders.

Colombo gulped down another mouthful of whiskey before slamming the cup down on the table.

"May I have another look at those pictures?"

"Of course."

Lun Tai immediately handed the mobile phone to Colombo.

Colombo then inspected the pictures carefully and his eyebrows furrowed up tightly.

“How about a cup?”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly heard Phoenix coming up beside him. In her hand was a bottle of whiskey she took from the wine cabinet. She also handed over a cup.

Phoenix cast a playful look at Chen Xiaolian and asked, “What is it? You are not about to tell me that you’re under aged and cannot drink, are you?”

Without saying anything, Chen Xiaolian accepted the cup and poured himself a cup.

Wine had a pungent taste – he was not into wine tasting, and knew nothing about it.

“You’re not drinking?” asked Chen Xiaolian as he threw a provocative expression at Phoenix.

Phoenix smiled. She raised the pomegranate juice in her hand and waved it before him. “Good girls do not drink wine.”

“Aaa!!!”

It was at that moment that Colombo suddenly exclaimed as he sprang up from the sofa.

“What is it?” asked Dr Mu, who quickly moved over. “What did you discover?”

“No no...” Colombo raised his head and said, “You... wait for a moment!”

Colombo rushed into a room. After a while, he came out with a laptop, which he placed on the table. Then, he turned it on.

After the computer was turned on, Colombo opened up a folder that was full of photos.

After searching around for a bit, he opened up one of the photos!

A photo appeared on the display screen of the laptop.

It was clearly depicting a murder scene. However, the photo was a very blurry, vintage, black and white photo. Additionally, there was a high rate of pixel loss on the photo.

The photo depicted a murder scene with one corpse that looked like a woman's where the surroundings was covered with blood.

The corpse was dissected with its belly cut open!

Colombo then slid to the photos at the back.

The next few pictures were of the same murder scene, shot from different angles.

There was a corpse, internal organs in their complete state and blood...
...

"This is?"

"These photos were taken by the police. They are the pictures of the first murder case committed by Jack the Ripper in 1888," said Colombo, his eyes shining. "Due to the photography technology at that time, the photos taken are comparatively blurry compared to present day photos. Additionally, due to it being kept for too long, some losses in definition were incurred. However... did you notice?"

"What?"

Colombo quickly retrieved a pair of glasses from under the table. Then, he placed the mobile phone beside the laptop.

"Have a look."

After looking at it, both Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix were stunned!

With the exception of the fact that the photo was in black and white with a different pixel count and of a different time...

The state of the corpse, its location and the dissection angle...

Almost all the details were the same!

In both photos, the deceased's facial features were partially covered with blood, making it difficult to identify her original features. However...

some of the details were shockingly similar!

One of the deceased hands was left jutting to the side while the other was bent. The corpse lying upon the ground formed the ‘片’ shape.

The head of the deceased was tilted slightly to the right, exposing the lower jaw area. Upon the mouth was a... ..

“Is that a mole?” asked a frowning Phoenix.

“It appears like it,” Chen Xiaolian answered with a grim expression.

Although they cannot discount the possibility of it being a problem with the old photo’s pixels, two black dots could clearly be seen on the deceased’s lower jaw area in the coloured photo. Those were clearly moles.

Moreover...

“Look at the wounds,” Colombo quickly said, “Both suffer from a knife wound on the neck, cutting in from the left... even the position is exactly similar!”

That was extremely odd!

The location of the wound appeared exactly the same!

“The same holds true for the chest wound. The knife pierced in through the ribs and into the heart in one stab! It is completely similar!” said an agitated Colombo. “The deceased’s posture and appearance are also strikingly similar!”

“Do you mean to say that the two deceased are the same person?” asked Lun Tai with widened eyes.

That was an impossibility.

The black and white photo was taken in the year 1888, over a hundred years ago. As for the deceased they saw earlier, she was clearly someone from the modern era. Within the bag by her side were her wallet, a cell phone, condoms and various other modern day products.

“How could they have the same appearance?” Phoenix’s eyes were

narrowed. "Could it be..."

She glanced at Chen Xiaolian to see him pursing his lips. He considered it before giving a wry smile. He muttered, "Could it be... the system spawned a similar character to play the deceased? An identical NPC?"

"That is certainly a possibility," Phoenix answered coolly. "The system can do anything."

The deduction was a mind-opener.

Perhaps... the system took the dead victims from over a hundred years ago and resurrected them in modern times to allow Jack the Ripper to kill them once more?

At any rate... this world was created by the system. The same was true of this instance dungeon and its 'storyline'. Thus, it was only natural that the system was able to take such an action.

"Since this is the same Jack the Ripper... I mean, the person wearing grey coloured suit that we saw was able to pass through a wall. He might actually be a ghost! If that is the case... if the murderer is the same, why can't the victims be the same? It's not that difficult for the system to resurrect an NPC. If it wants to, it could do anything in order to have the storyline fall in place," Chen Xiaolian said with a wry smile.

Colombo knitted his eyebrows and asked, "What system? What instance dungeon? What are you people talking about?"

"That is not something you need to know," Chen Xiaolian quickly answered. He then pointed at the old photo on the laptop's display screen. "This murder shown in this photo..."

"The first one! In the historical records about Jack the Ripper, this is the first case he was involved in. That is the record written by the police on this photo," Colombo said slowly.

"The first case..." Chen Xiaolian's eyes immediately flickered.

"Then... since this is the first case, won't there be a second case? I mean now?" Phoenix asked immediately.

“This is a clue!” said Chen Xiaolian, a flash flickering through his eyes.

He stood up and paced around within the living room. Then, he poured himself another cup of wine and gulped it down.

“According to history, Jack the Ripper was involved in a total of five cases.”

“There are records that prove that there were five of them. Perhaps they were more. However, the police was unable to determine that they were committed by the same person,” Colombo supplied.

“Very well,” Chen Xiaolian waved his hand. “That is not the main point. The main point is... I need to know the place where the first case happened! The accurate location for the case that happened back then!”

Colombo quickly pulled out a map from within his laptop and said, “I have the map of London from back then! I have been researching this case for more than five years.”

“You have quite the special hobby,” said Chen Xiaolian as he looked at the fellow.

Colombo clicked open the old map of London before opening the present map of London. After fidgeting for a bit...

After comparing the two maps on the display screen... everyone was shocked!

“According to history, the first murder case took place in the east of Whitechapel at this location... according to the present-day map, this old building have been demolished. In its place is the Whitechapel subway station!” said Colombo, his body trembling. “Bloody Hell! It’s the subway station! The location is exactly the same!”

Everyone within the room felt their hair standing on end as they felt a chilling air pierce out through their hearts!

This... was too bewildering!

“Could it be? This random quest would allow Jack the Ripper to reproduce the cases written in history?” Chen Xiaolian knitted his

eyebrows. He asked, "Phoenix, you checked the deceased female's handbag. Where is her purse?"

Phoenix quickly retrieved a poor-quality looking purse out from her storage equipment.

"Try to see if you can find anything equivalent to an identity card," Chen Xiaolian quickly said.

That was an easy task. Phoenix immediately pulled out an item from the purse. "I don't see any UK identity card. However, there is a driver's license here."

"Colombo," Chen Xiaolian asked, "In the historical records, the first deceased female... what is her name?"

For this forensic expert who loved researching Jack the Ripper's case, this was a very easy question. Colombo quickly answered, "Martha..."

Phoenix suddenly interrupted him, "Martha Tabram."

"Eh? Yes, that is the name," Colombo was momentarily stunned.

With a solemn look on her face, Phoenix placed the driver's license on the table. The name written upon the card was:

{Martha_Tabram}!

Chen Xiaolian forcefully clenched his teeth and said, "Looks like it's obvious now what is going on!"

This was all the system's work!

It resurrected the victims recorded in history to repeat the storyline!

Phoenix had clearly reached the same conclusion and she asked, "Mr Colombo! What about the circumstances of the second murder case?"

Chapter 191: The Second Victim

“Err... it happened 24 days after the first murder case...”

“24 days? No no no!” Chen Xiaolian quickly said. “The time given by the system is 48 hours! In other words, I believe that the system will let Jack the Ripper’s story repeat itself within 48 hours. Within these 48 hours, the murderer will continuously commit murders! It will not involve so many days. That is the time limit given by the system!”

“So, within these 48 hours, we need to catch Jack the Ripper before he could finish completing his work. Otherwise, we will fail the quest,” the smart Phoenix was quick to understand Chen Xiaolian’s meaning.

“The matter is now clear,” Chen Xiaolian slapped his right fist into his left palm heavily. “We need to catch Jack the Ripper as soon as possible. The fastest way to do so would be to get to the scene of the second murder! This is the best opportunity for us! Mr Colombo, is there an accurate record on the time and location of the second murder case?”

“The second murder case is also near Whitechapel. The location is... Whitechapel’s merchandise storage area,” Colombo inspected the present-day map and said, “Err, the place had been demolished. It is now... a park. As for the time... 24 days after the first case... 3.45 in the morning.”

“There is no need to consider the number of days. The time... 3.45 in the morning? Are you certain?”

“The time was a deduction made by the police through the inspection of the deceased’s corpse. Although it cannot be said to be very accurate... it should not be too far off from the correct time.”

“Damn it!” Chen Xiaolian glanced at the clock in the room.

It was now 3.21 in the morning!

Clearly, the same thought had occurred to Phoenix and she said, “You mean...”

“The date might not be the same, but the time may likely be the same!”

Chen Xiaolian had already jumped up. “No matter what, there is no harm in checking it out!”

Everyone there understood the intentions of the two Guild Leaders.

“There is still 20 minutes. Will we make it?” asked a frowning Chen Xiaolian.

“We’ll have to try!” Phoenix stood up. “Let’s move out! What are you waiting for?”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Colombo and suddenly said, “Mr Colombo... I want to ask you to come with us. We may need your expertise... however, I will not force you. After all, there is the possibility of encountering danger...”

“What a joke! I cannot give up the opportunity to be part of the scene where we capture Jack the Ripper!” The forensic expert was excited and he continued, “I have been researching this case for more than five years!”

By then, he had already grabbed a coat that was hanging on the wall. “Do I need to drive?”

...

The two cars raced through the night streets of London. They were clearly going over the speed limit. However, this was not the time to worry about that!

If Roddy had participated in the instance dungeon, Chen Xiaolian would certainly have Roddy summon out the Mech! The Mech’s lowest speed of flight was at least higher than the subsonic speed!

Even so, the car throttle was pressed down until it reached the bottom!

The city of London was actually not too big and there was no traffic jam at night. Their two cars sped for less than 10 minutes before re-entering the Whitechapel area.

Following Colombo’s instructions, the cars were parked by a street located not far away from a park.

Several years ago, the London government built the small park to add more greenery to the city as part of the initiative to welcome the Olympic Games. It looked relatively new and the maintenance done on it was also fairly well done.

It was then 3.36 in the morning.

They got off the car and ran toward the park.

“Split up! Surround the park!” Phoenix’s suggestion received Chen Xiaolian’s approval.

The Titan brothers headed east while Monster and Dagger headed west. As for Lun Tai and Bei Tai, they headed south and north respectively.

The four of them waited in ambush.

The two Guild Leaders, Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix brought Dr Mu and Colombo with them as they entered the park.

“Later, no matter what happens, do not panic and do not run around! Remember to follow close by and not get left behind. I will endeavour to ensure your safety,” Chen Xiaolian glanced at both Dr Mu and Colombo. “Naturally, this woman will also do her best to protect you two.”

Phoenix revealed a faint smile and she suddenly forwarded a question, “Mr Colombo, what is the name of the second victim?”

“Mary Ann Nichols,” Colombo answered quickly, “Likewise, she was a female prostitute. In fact, all of Jack the Ripper’s victims were female prostitutes.”

...

London itself was not that huge. As for the park, it was not as big as those parks found in China.

The surface area of the small park was only about two to three acres. Converting the measurement into China’s domestic units, it would be around tens of mǔ [1].

If not for the fact that the park was planted with an abundant amount of trees and had some buildings built within it, they would have been able

to spot the corners of the park with just a glance.

By then, it was already 3.40 in the morning. There was roughly only about 5 minutes of time before the murderer made his move.

The group with Chen Xiaolian, Phoenix walked quickly through the park's road.

Although it was early in the morning, the park was not devoid of people. They encountered a suspicious woman at the entrance of the park.

She wore heavy makeup and a leather coat that was obviously cool when worn. When Chen Xiaolian was walking past her, she opened up her coat to reveal a body wearing sexy *** [2]. She smiled and said, "Mr, are you looking for some fun? I can do anything. For twenty pounds, we can do it on the bench in the park. If you are willing to pay an additional 10 pounds, I have an apartment nearby. There is hot shower available."

Chen Xiaolian took one glance at the woman and ignored her – she was a black woman. Clearly, she was not the target.

"This was once a slums area after all. Some street girls will come here at night to look for business... the police couldn't do much against this situation," Colombo said with a wry smile. "However, it is rare for any of them to be here at this time. At this hour, those female prostitutes would usually have gotten off work or having returned after scoring a transaction."

"Shh!"

Chen Xiaolian suddenly made a gesture to shut him up.

Chen Xiaolian was able to see a woman sitting on a bench in the park some distance away.

The woman had blond hair... there was a high possibility that she had dyed her hair.

She was a Caucasian, not too tall and dressed in very gaudy clothes. The same was true about her make up.

Most importantly, the woman's age was not small. She was likely over

30 years old, perhaps even 40 years old.

From the way she was dressed, she too, appeared to be a streetwalker.

“Could that be her?” Chen Xiaolian pointed to the distance as he asked Colombo in a low tone. The four of them hid behind a clump of bushes.

“I don’t know...” Colombo strained his eyes to look – he was an ordinary person whose eye sight was not as good as Chen Xiaolian’s. He said, “She should be a streetwalker... these females will compete for business. The younger ones with better business will seize a good spot by the street while the older ones with less business will be relegated to low quality areas.”

Chen Xiaolian thought about it and was about to take a step forward when –

“What do you want to do?” asked Phoenix. She frowned and stopped him. Phoenix whispered, “It would be better for us to wait here. She is the only one inside this park! It has to be her! If that is the case, Jack the Ripper will appear soon. We’ll just wait for him to arrive and catch him. If you going up there end up beating the bush to startle the snake [3], then what?”

Chen Xiaolian’s eyebrows were raised and he said, “All right.”

Quietly, the four of them moved forward until they were at a distance of 30 m from the woman. They hid inside a clump of bushes... unfortunately; they were unable to get any closer. They were no other place for them to hide.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the time. It was already 3.44 in the morning!

The cold wind of the night caused both Dr Mu and Colombo to shrink their necks. That was especially true of Colombo who was only wearing a trench coat. The temperature was also very low. Colombo’s entire body was trembling. It was unknown if he was trembling due to the cold or excitement.

The four of them waited patiently in the bushes... ..

However, after ten minutes had passed, everything remained silent. Nothing abnormal occurred.

“It is already 3.55 in the morning,” said a frowning Phoenix. “The time has passed.”

“Perhaps the time recorded in history is just an estimate. There could be errors. Let’s wait some more,” said Chen Xiaolian.

However, after a quarter of an hour passed... it was already 4.10 in the morning...

Traces of brightness had begun to appear in the sky above.

The woman sitting on the bench stood up and shook her leg. It appeared that she too, felt very cold.

She paced around for a bit before lighting herself a cigarette.

“Bloody Hell, it’s almost 4.30...” said Colombo as he shivered.

From the looks of it, the woman too, was able to wait no more. She tossed the cigarette down the ground and stamped on it. Cursing out in a whisper, she then left with an unwilling expression.

The direction she took happened to lead her toward them.

“What should we do? She is about to leave,” asked Phoenix in a low tone.

Chen Xiaolian thought about it for a moment. Then, he suddenly pulled Colombo up with him and the two of them walked out from the clump of bushes. They walked toward the woman.

Seeing the two men coming over, the woman’s eyes lit up and she immediately stopped walking. In an instant, she put on what she considered to be the most sultry appearance as she deliberately pulled back the skirt of her coat, exposing one bare leg out.

“Gentlemen, looking for some fun? In such a cold weather...” said the woman. Her eyes were fixed onto both Chen Xiaolian and Colombo as she continued, “Or... we can do a threesome, I can do that.”

Chen Xiaolian purposely halted, Colombo as well. He then looked at the woman.

Looking at her up close, he could see that the woman's face was aging. Not even the thick makeup could cover the wrinkles on her eye area.

Chen Xiaolian took a step forward and spoke loudly, "Woman! We are the police! Now, we want to check your credentials!"

"... ..what?"

Chen Xiaolian forcefully nudged Colombo, surprising him. However, Colombo reacted quickly and produced something from his pocket, which he quickly flashed before the woman. There was something that looked like a metal badge on it.

"See?" Chen Xiaolian deliberately spoke out in a cold voice. "Do you have any credential that can prove your identity? Please cooperate!"

"Damn it! I did not do anything!" said the woman. She appeared somewhat timid and she vigilantly stepped back, seemingly wanting to escape. However, she looked at the two men in front, and looked at the high heels that she was wearing and bit her lips. "I... .. I did not do anything! Don't try to scare me! I know my rights! I am a citizen! I am a taxpayer!"

"Enough! Show us your credentials!" shouted Colombo.

The woman was livid but there was nothing she could do. She could only dig through her handbag. "I... I brought my driving license."

Chen Xiaolian was quick to grab over her driving license. He looked at it before handing it to Colombo.

Colombo's eyes turned wide.

Name ...

Mary Ann Nichols.

The second victim in history!

...

1 One mǔ is one fifteenth of a hectare.

2 The *** is what is in the Qidian raws. Maybe the author wants you all to use your imagination.

3 'Beating the bush to startle the snake' means to act rashly and alert the enemy. It is also sometimes used as a strategy to force the enemy to make a move.

Chapter 192: Sequence of Murder

Without saying anything, Chen Xiaolian placed the woman's driving license into his pocket.

"Hey, return it to me!" said the woman. She appeared agitated.

"Enough! Stop yelling!" said Chen Xiaolian who went over and grabbed her arm. He continued, "Now, come with us. We suspect that you... en..."

He was not familiar with the laws of the UK.

As a forensics expert, Colombo quickly chipped in, "We suspect that you are engaged in making illegal transactions through indecent behaviour. Now, come with us!"

"No! You cannot do this! I did not do anything! You have no right to... Damn it! Unhand me, you bastards!"

Chen Xiaolian ignored the woman's struggles and he seized and shoved both her arms to her back.

Colombo was stunned and he was at a loss at what to do. He said, "That, are we really going to take her..."

Chen Xiaolian struck the woman's neck with a palm strike, knocking her unconscious. Then, he swung her over his shoulder and said, "Carry her bag!"

"... .. eh? Oh oh oh, all right!" Colombo stuttered and he quickly picked up the handbag that was left on the ground.

Seeing Chen Xiaolian carrying the woman over, Phoenix and Dr Mu emerged from the clump of bushes.

"What are you doing?" asked a frowning Phoenix.

Chen Xiaolian pointed upward toward the sky and said, "Did you not see that the sky is getting brighter? It seems that the killer is not coming... we might as well bring her back with us."

"Bring her back?"

Chen Xiaolian shook his head and answered, "This is not a good place to discuss this. Let's go!"

After saying that, he carried the woman and ran out of the park.

Phoenix quickly contacted the other members and they met up by their cars.

Chen Xiaolian shoved the woman into the back of the car. He also produced a rope to tie up the woman's hands. Turning around, he glanced at Phoenix and said, "What are you staring at? Come help out!"

Phoenix narrowed her eyes as she inspected the rope that Chen Xiaolian was using to tie up the woman. She blurted out, "Black Widow's spider silk?"

Something akin to a smile flashed through her eyes and she said, "You sure know how to make good use of everything."

As she spoke, she produced a blindfold and proceeded to blindfold the woman.

"Out with it, what exactly are you planning?"

After hearing Phoenix's question, Chen Xiaolian pointed up to the sky, exhaled and said, "We may have made a mistake."

"What?"

"You see, we have been observing the trunk and waiting for the rabbit to come [1]. In the end, the rabbit did not appear," Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips to the side and continued, "What is the problem?"

"Maybe Jack went to kill someone else," Phoenix answered after giving it some thought.

"That is possible," said Chen Xiaolian who nodded his head. Then, he said, "However, there is another possibility... maybe, we've been found out. Do not forget, the Jack created by the system might be the same one as in history... we've seen him before. He could go through walls. He might be a ghost or some spirit entity. Hell only knows that he is.

"He might have noticed us back when we were running over to set up

the ambush. We were able to hide ourselves within the bushes. But, he might have a stronger hiding ability. Perhaps, he could even become invisible... those are all possible.”

“If so...”

“So, if merely observing the trunk and waiting for the rabbit won’t work, I want to cut down the trunk and bring it home!” Chen Xiaolian grinned and continued, “That way, the rabbit will come to us!”

...

Lun Tai, Bei Tai and the others had already returned. When Chen Xiaolian told them about his plan, both Lun Tai and Bei Tai was shocked. Then, Lun Tai laughed, “This idea is quite interesting.”

“Idiot!” Naturally, the one who objected was Dagger. It was questionable as to whether he was simply born with a ridiculing face or if Chen Xiaolian had a hate-inducing aura around him. Looking at Chen Xiaolian caused a feeling of dislike to rise within him and he spoke out harshly, “To think you would suggest such a stupid idea. What if the killer chooses to give up on this target and chooses to go after a different person? What a joke!”

Chen Xiaolian ignored him and asked Colombo, “Mr Colombo, there are five victims recorded in history. Last night, the first victim had fallen. Now, we have the second victim with us... now, I need the information of the other three victims.”

“Eh? Oh...” Colombo combed through his mind and said, “The other three victims are Annie Chapman, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly.”

“Good, the location?”

“Err... Annie Chapman was killed in Hanbury Street while Catherine Eddowes died near Bishop Street. As for Mary Jane Kelly, she was found dead in her apartment at Dorset Street,” answered Colombo. As expected of one who had researched up on this case for years, he was highly knowledgeable about those information. Pausing for a moment, Colombo

then said, "The third and fourth victims died in outdoor areas. Only the fifth victim died in her own home..."

"Map! I need a map!" Chen Xiaolian hastily said.

Colombo quickly produced his mobile phone and opened up a map of London.

"We need to take advantage of the time!" Chen Xiaolian quickly said, "The fifth victim died in her own home... in that case, I believe the system will let the story progress in the similar manner. There should be an exact address for the fifth victim, just like in history! Thus... we'll now split up. One group will go find the fifth victim and bring her back!"

"I'll go," said Lun Tai.

"Damn it! Guild Leader, are we just going to stand by and watch as they muck about?" Dagger roared furiously: "If you people were to do that, you might beat the bush to startle the snake and scare the killer away! When that happens, we won't be able to catch the killer, and we will fail to complete the quest. How will you take responsibility when that happens?"

"That's enough, Dagger," Phoenix interrupted Dagger and said, "I feel that Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian's idea is very interesting. There is no harm in giving it a try."

Phoenix turned to Chen Xiaolian and said, "If that is the case, let my team members go find the fifth victim."

Chen Xiaolian looked at Phoenix and hesitated for a moment before saying, "All right."

"The fifth victim's name is Mary Jane Kelly. Historical records states that she lived in Dorset Street. Err, the street is still here. However, the old building is probably no more..."

"Since we have her name and a general idea on where she is, it won't be a problem," Phoenix quickly said: "Monster! Titan!"

The pair of twins and the monkey-carrying Monster quickly moved over.

Phoenix said, "You'll be going. Remember, Dorset Street, Mary Jane Kelly. Find this woman and bring her back!"

"All right, no problem, Guild Leader," Monster answered in a muffled voice. The Titan brothers simply cast a glance at Phoenix. Without saying anything, they left together with Monster in a car.

"Then, the other two... we'll go find them and bring them back."

"That... I fear that might prove difficult. The historical records did state where they were killed. However, they had no fixed residence..." said Colombo, a bitter smile on his face. "So..."

Chen Xiaolian thought of something. He then looked at the unconscious woman in the back of the car and said, "There might be a way."

...

Mary Ann Nichols woke up and found herself lying on a sofa. She immediately jumped up, and she looked around in fear.

She was in Colombo's living room. The forensic expert was clutching his scalp as he stood beside, muttering, "Damn it, I must be out of my mind. I am actually helping you in a kidnapping case... Heavens, I will get in trouble for this."

"Don't worry, Mr Colombo. I assure you, when we leave, you will not be in any trouble."

Chen Xiaolian patted the forensic expert on the shoulder. Then, he pulled over a chair and sat before Mary Ann Nichols.

The woman looked at Chen Xiaolian in fear.

"You people... who are you people? You are not the police! This is not the police station!"

"Calm down, lady," Chen Xiaolian sighed.

"No! I want to leave! Let me leave!" She screamed and tried to run toward the door. However, Lun Tai grabbed her with one arm and pushed her back down onto the sofa.

“You people... could it be, you are Yuri’s men? Damn it! I did not go to Yuri’s place to look for business! I have been doing my business in the park this week! I swear! I swear!” she cried out. It appeared that she had misunderstood the situation.

Chen Xiaolian pursed his lips to the side before saying, “We are not Yuri’s men. Lady, please calm down first. We want to ask a favour from you.”

“I don’t have anything, Mr... I have no money, I have nothing valuable. My purse, my mobile phone... my handbag, you can take it all. You can take all of it, but please do not hurt me.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at the poor woman before him and he gave out a gentle sigh.

She was no longer young and was likely near forty years old. No matter how thick her makeup was, it could not cover the haggard look of age on her face.

No doubt, she was someone who had to struggle just to live, a pitiful person living in the bottom rung of society.

“Listen up, we are not the police, nor are we part of a gangster group. And we are certainly not sent over by Yuri... ... the reason we came looking for you, is because we want you to help us out a little. Furthermore... as long as you obediently cooperate, not only will we not harm you, I promise, you will be able to earn quite a bit of money.”

Chen Xiaolian pulled out a stack of pounds and placed them on the table.

“... ...” The woman was stunned. However, the stack of pounds on the table was very attractive in her eyes. Chen Xiaolian noticed that she could not restrain herself from secretly glancing over to the stack of money.

Chen Xiaolian deliberately put on a smile and picked up the money before stuffing it back into his pocket – the woman’s eyes had been following the stack of money as it was moved.

“You people... just what is it that you people want from me?” asked the woman as she swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

Chen Xiaolian smiled. He attempted to make his smile appear more amiable.

“You usually find work around Whitechapel, right?” asked Chen Xiaolian.

“I... ..” The woman appeared hesitant to answer.

“Lady...”

“Call me Polly. That is what everyone calls me,” The woman said as her eyes darted around.

“All right, Polly,” Chen Xiaolian smiled and said, “You see, we already know what it is you do. As for us, we are not the police, we are not responsible for arresting those who commit illegal activities... those things have nothing to do with us, do you understand? You do not need to worry about it.”

“... ..” Polly thought it through and answered, “All right.”

“Now, just answer a few of my questions, all right?” Chen Xiaolian smiled.

“... would you let me go after I answer your questions? And... give me that... money?”

Chen Xiaolian did not answer her questions. Instead, he asked her, “What is your name?”

“Mary Ann Nichols... err, actually, my name is Mary Ann Walker. Walker is my maiden name. However, after coming to London, I changed it. I did it because... being called Nichols give some people the feeling that I am of Russian descent... some of the customers like that,” Polly answered obediently. “However, my friends all call me Polly.”

“Well then, how old are you?”

“Thirty-three...” she said, an obvious look of guilt appearing on her face. “Err, I am thirty-eight years old.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled without saying anything. He simply continued gazing at her.

Polly was unable to get used to the stare and she stuttered, "All right, I am forty years old..."

"I hope you can tell me the truth," Chen Xiaolian said with a sigh.

"All right! All right! I'm forty-three years old! That is my real age! Are you are satisfied now!" The frustrated Polly was forced to tell the truth.

Forty-three years old...

For someone to do this at this age... Chen Xiaolian could not stop himself from sighing.

Honestly, she was truly a very poor and pitiful woman.

Upon her body could be seen the marks of those from the bottom rung who had to struggle just to survive.

She was a smoker. Additionally, there was also signs of alcoholism – there was a scent of alcohol on her clothes.

In fact, before she woke up, Colombo had conducted some inspections on her and saw that there were some needle marks on her body... there was a high chance that this woman was also a drug addict.

"Good. See? Is this not a good? What I need is for you to honestly answer my questions."

Chen Xiaolian pulled out the stack of money and counted out several notes worth two hundred pounds, which he handed over.

"One question, one hundred pounds," said Chen Xiaolian as he smiled.

After accepting the money, she inspected them carefully before stuffing them into her chest area.

It was clear that after the stimulation of money, she became somewhat excited. She asked, "What other questions do you have?"

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

Phoenix who was standing beside also smiled.

“The third question, do you always conduct your business in the vicinity of Whitechapel area?” asked Chen Xiaolian.

“Yes,” Polly answered happily.

Chen Xiaolian pulled out another note and handed it over before asking, “Then, Annie Chapman, Catherine Eddowes... have you heard of these two names before?”

“... ..” The woman did not directly answer the question. Instead, her eyes turned and she asked, “That... does that count as two questions?”

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

He smiled because, after hearing her words, it was obvious that this woman knew those names!

Chen Xiaolian happily pulled out another two notes and placed them on the surface of the table.

“I know them both. Annie Chapman – we all call her Black Annie, because she is black. Catherine Eddowes... I do not like her. She has been married twice. We call her Kate.”

“Are you friends with them? Are you very close with them?” asked Chen Xiaolian.

“Black Annie... I am closer to her. I often do business together with her... if you know what I mean.”

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian felt rather awkward. However, he covered it up properly.

Polly continued, “Actually... when I was in the park earlier, Black Annie was also there. However, she was at the entrance to the park...”

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

He recalled the black woman who came over to seduce him at the entrance earlier... unexpectedly, it was actually her!

A hint of chagrin welled up within his heart and Chen Xiaolian was unable to stop himself from sighing.

“As for Kate ... I’m not too close with her. I also do not know where she lives.”

After saying that, Polly showed some hesitation. She asked, “You people... why do you want to find them? They... do they owe you money?”

Chen Xiaolian did not answer the question. Instead, he pulled out another two bills. He asked, “How do I go about finding them?”

“I...” Polly appeared hesitant. Despite her greed, this situation was causing her to hesitate. She asked, “You... you won’t hurt them, would you?”

“No,” answered a smiling Chen Xiaolian. “I promise you, after finding them; we will only ask them a few questions.”

“Black Annie is my friend, I know her number. But... that Kate. I am not close with her. However, I know that the b*tch is an alcoholic. Every night, she will frequent the Savage Bar for a few glasses of beer before looking for customers. Sometimes, she would even seduce some people in the bar. If you want to look for her, you can try your luck at the Savage Bar at night.”

Chen Xiaolian sighed and placed another bill on the table. He said, “All right, give me Black Annie’s number.”

Polly gave them the phone number.

Chen Xiaolian had Colombo make the call. However, they found that the phone was not turned on.

“Err... she usually sleeps during the day and turns off her phone. You know... we usually come out to work at night,” said Polly. She was afraid that Chen Xiaolian would demand that she return the money and she quickly stuffed the money into her chest. “But, I know where she lives! I can tell you.”

The woman gave them an address.

After that, she asked, “Are you done questioning me? I... can I go now? I swear, I will not report this to the police! I will also not reveal what you

look like... hey, I know the rules.”

Chen Xiaolian made a hand gesture toward Lun Tai, who came over and immediately seized Polly’s arms and tied her up with a rope.

“Hey! What are you doing? You liar! Just now, you said you would let me go! Wu wu wu wu...”

Before she could utter any curses, Lun Tai gagged her by stuffing a clump of cloth into her mouth.

“Don’t worry; I will keep my end of the bargain. I will not hurt you... however; you will need to stay here for a while longer. I promise that it won’t be too long. Furthermore... I promise that I won’t hurt you.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled and turned to Colombo. He asked, “Mr Colombo, you have a free room in your house, right?”

Colombo rolled his eyes.

Thus, Polly was stuffed into the guest room. Lun Tai had inspected the room and found no phone in the room. The windows were locked and the woman was tied up with the Black Widow’s spider silk – unless she was an Awakened, she could forget about breaking free.

“Now, let’s go find Black Annie,” said Chen Xiaolian with a sigh. “Damn it! If only we knew, we could have caught her back yesterday! We missed an opportunity there!”

“It’s not too late to do so now,” said Phoenix as she stood up.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the Phoenix. He said, “I can go I know how the woman looks like.”

“I will go with you,” Phoenix smiled coolly.

She retrieved the special revolver of hers, placed it on the table and said to Lun Tai, “I will loan this to you. Keep guard here and protect our guide character... and also the victims. If anything happens... prioritize the protection of the guide character!”

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. Lun Tai showed no hesitation as he picked up the revolver before inspecting it.

Phoenix also produced several special bullets, which she left with them. After that, she followed Chen Xiaolian out.

“I say, Big Bro... I get the feeling that there is something strange with this young woman.”

Bei Tai sat beside Lun Tai. He held onto a bottle of whiskey and gulped down a mouthful of the wine. Then, he asked, “Why is she always following our Guild Leader? Could it be that she has fallen for our Guild Leader?”

“Shut up,” Lun Tai pursed his lips to the side. “Don’t go spouting nonsense.”

Bei Tai suddenly wagged his eyebrows and whispered, “Say, could Guild Leader have brought her to go eat McDonald’s?”

“What? What McDonald’s?”

“Big Bro, you are really stupid... have you never heard the song they play during McDonald’s advertisement?”

“Eh? McDonald’s advertisement song?”

“Ba~le pa pa pa~! ... [2] ... Ha ha ha ha...”

...

Both Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix left, unaware of the nonsense being discussed by the two fellows.

Chen Xiaolian remained vigilant toward the young woman beside him – she appeared very friendly, and the attitude she exhibited toward their cooperation had been very good. She had also spoken up before to stop the dissatisfaction shown by her team members.

However, a feeling from the bottom of his heart told him that this young woman was no simple character!

“Why did you come with me?”

After getting on the car, Chen Xiaolian asked as he was starting up the car.

“Because... .. I like being with you ah,” Phoenix smiled sweetly.

Chen Xiaolian’s hand, which was holding onto the steering wheel shuddered and their car nearly slammed into a wall.

“Ha ha ha ha,” Phoenix laughed and pointed at Chen Xiaolian. “You are really gullible. Can’t you take a joke?”

“That joke is not funny,” said Chen Xiaolian in a muffled voice.

“Why do I want to follow you? En, that is simple, because I want to keep an eye on you,” Phoenix replied coolly and smiled. “The one known as Polly is safely in our hands... but now, we need to go look for Black Annie... if you are to go alone and do something... I won’t feel at ease letting you go out alone.”

“... .. you are overthinking things,” said Chen Xiaolian coldly. “Your team members went to find the fifth victim, but I did not say anything at all about it.”

“Have not the desire to harm others, lack not the desire to protect oneself,” said Phoenix, who leaned upon her seat. “From this point of view, you are really naïve. If I were you, I would never let my team members go find the fifth victim... at the very least, I would send someone to monitor the situation.”

Pausing for a moment, Phoenix then said in a low tone, “Right, about Jack the Ripper. What are your thoughts on it? Do you think that he is really a ghost? One that was spawned out by the system?”

“Hard to say,” replied Chen Xiaolian.

Phoenix suddenly spoke up, “Have you watched this movie called ‘Final Destination’ before?”

“... .. yes.”

“I have this speculation. Perhaps Jack the Ripper is just a killer program created by the system. As long as he kills the five victims in sequence, the system wins. However, if we are to protect one of those victims... then...” Phoenix’s eyes flickered.

Chen Xiaolian's expression shifted and he said, "Then, the system will skip over the one that is being protected and go for the next one?" Phoenix frowned and replied, "If that is the case... Polly is the second one, but she is now being protected. The third is Black Annie!"

Chen Xiaolian looked at Phoenix and said, "You mean to say, if the killer cannot kill Polly, he would go for the next victim in the sequence and kill Black Annie! This... is the reason why you insist on coming with me to find Black Annie?"

"Correct! So, you had better drive faster! I do not wish to see a sickening corpse when we arrive there."

...

—

1 'Observe the trunk and wait for the rabbit' means a narrow-minded or inexperienced way of working. Once upon a time, there was a lazy farmer who saw a rabbit run into a trunk and died (there was a loud commotion of sorts that day). As a result, the farmer was able to fix himself a sumptuous meal that night. Since then, the farmer stopped farming and instead chose to wait near the miraculous trunk, waiting for more rabbits to 'come'.

2 'Pa pa pa' my friends, is the glorious sound of procreation...
#ifyouknowwhatimean# ... ok, ok, it's sex.↵

Chapter 193: Loophole

Hanbury Street was located in between Whitechapel area and Baker Street. It was not too far when compared to the park that Chen Xiaolian and the others went to yesterday night.

It was presently around seven in the morning. As Chen Xiaolian was driving toward the destination, he caught sight of the flashing lights coming from the lights above police cars parked in the distance. A yellow cordon was set up and police officers could be seen milling about busily inside the blockade.

Early morning joggers could be seen standing to the side, watching what was happening. There were also reporters from the media wandering around with cameras. They appeared to be looking for something.

“We... may be too late!”

Chen Xiaolian’s face sank and he halted the car by the street. He got down the car together with Phoenix and walked over. However, they were stopped outside the yellow cordon by two police officers.

“If I may... what happened inside?” Chen Xiaolian glanced around and asked a reporter who was carrying a camera.

“A murder case, a pitiful woman was stabbed several times. The scene of crime was comparable to Hell itself,” answered the reporter. Despite what he said, the reporter’s eyes instead revealed excitement. He waved his hands and shouted toward the police officers within the cordon, “Hey! You cannot stop us from going inside! The media has a right to report and the public has the right to know, and...”

“Enough,” a red-nosed police officer muttered. He moved over and gave the reporter a harsh glare before saying, “The police will make an announcement later. At present, it would be best that you do not come across the cordon line.”

“Damn it!” the reporter swore and moved away.

Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix looked at each other.

Phoenix suddenly patted Chen Xiaolian and extended her hand before him before slowly spreading out the palm of her hand.

Her hand was a work of art, with delicate and slender fingers – naturally, that was not the main point. The main point was the thing within Phoenix's palm. Two unique looking badges rested within her palm.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes turned peculiar after seeing them. Surprisingly, the shape of the two badges was a... hexagram pattern. They were the size of a copper coin and words that Chen Xiaolian could not read were engraved on the side of the badges.

"This is?"

"A useful item, the Universal Access Badge. By wearing it, others will accept you as a comrade. It is a very useful tool for infiltration purposes – a product of the system," replied a smiling Phoenix. She then handed one of them to Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian followed Phoenix's lead and pinned the badge onto his body. Phoenix simply walked forward, bent her waist and stepped past the cordon line.

The red-nosed police officer turned around and cast a glance before turning his head away indifferently. He did not bother questioning her at all.

Chen Xiaolian was surprised. He stepped across the cordon line and caught up to Phoenix. "This thing..."

"Under such circumstances, wearing it will cause them to think that we are also police officers. Trust me, products made by the system are all very useful. Not too long ago, I used it to gain access to the movie set of 'Star Wars 7'," Phoenix winked. "It can also be used to gain access to those high-class clubs. Using it, you will automatically be considered a member. Ah... but the badge becomes invalid if the place has something to do with some highly classified national-level security."

...

There was a flower shop located not far away from the street. The murder scene was behind the fence beside the flower shop.

The fence was not made of wood or metal. Instead, it was made of shrubbery.

One of the plants revealed signs that indicated that something or someone had pressed down on it. This meant that the victim might have been jumped on in the street and forcibly dragged toward the shrub fence.

At the murder scene, police officers were taking pictures while forensics and autopsy personnel were carefully checking the corpse. They also inspected the surroundings.

Although Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix moved closer, they did not attract any unwanted attention from the others – it appeared that the police officers considered them as comrades.

However, it was likely that things would change if they were to get closer. As Chen Xiaolian tried to step across the shrubbery, a suit wearing police officer scolded him, “Don’t go over! Are you new? Go guard the vicinity and make sure the reporters don’t get to come inside!”

Phoenix silently pulled out her mobile phone and quickly took a few pictures. Then, she patted Chen Xiaolian and asked, “Did you discover anything?”

“No...”

Chen Xiaolian stood outside the shrub fence and peered at the corpse inside.

Judging by the physical aspects and the clothes worn by the corpse, it was apparent that the victim was the black woman they encountered back in the park last night.

She wore a coat that was partially pulled down.

A piece of cloth covered her chest and abdomen area, making it impossible to see whether or not the Ripper had dissected open her abdomen. However, observing the amount of blood splattered over the

ground... the answer was evident.

Chen Xiaolian covered his nose and endured the pungent smell of blood. After that, he turned to Phoenix and said, "Let's go."

After leaving the cordoned area, Chen Xiaolian took off the badge and returned it to Phoenix. He said, "Your team members..."

"They sent a message to me a few minutes ago. They found the fifth woman and are now on the way back," Phoenix answered with a smile. "Everything is going smoothly there."

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

The two of them entered the car. Chen Xiaolian started the car with a puzzled look on his face. He said, "I keep getting this feeling that I am missing something."

"What?" Phoenix looked at him.

Chen Xiaolian shook his head and said, "I do not know. But, I feel that I am missing something..."

He looked at Phoenix and asked, "Do you have this feeling?"

Uncertainty could be seen in Phoenix's eyes.

Feeling vexed, Chen Xiaolian rolled down the window and directed his gaze toward the police officers who were busily working within the cordoned area.

His mind suddenly thought of something!

"Ghost! The female ghost!"

Chen Xiaolian became excited and he firmly held onto the steering wheel. He continued, "Do you remember? When we were at the first murder scene, a female ghost appeared! The deceased's ghost transformed into a vengeful spirit to attack us!"

Phoenix was stunned and she lost her composure: "You mean to say..."

"If we are to assume that victim's soul will transform into a vengeful spirit to attack after dying... that could be a process set by the system! If

that is the case... since this murder occurred, would the deceased also..." Chen Xiaolian clutched his head and said, "Wrong, that is wrong! Could it be? Because there are too many police officers here... the female ghost did not appear due to this? But, if we are to assume that, there were a lot of us present during the time of the first murder scene. Yet, the female ghost appeared anyways to attack us..."

Phoenix gaped before suddenly saying, "That's wrong... back then, the one that the vengeful spirit was attacking doesn't seem to be us! It's..."

Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered and he turned to face Phoenix: "You mean..."

...

Upon the TV screen, the morning news was re-broadcasting a football game from last night: Chelsea vs Tottenham.

The moment a goal was scored, Bei Tai who was seated on the sofa laughed out and gulped down a mouthful of beer before praising, "Beautiful!"

Colombo was seated beside. He watched the TV with a depressed and bored expression on his face.

"You don't like football?" asked a smiling Bei Tai.

"This is London, UK," the forensics expert rolled his eyes and answered, "Why should I cheer for Chelsea? I am an Arsenal fan!"

Bei Tai pursed his lips to the side and stood up. He then moved to window and peered outside. He said, "It's dawn. We should get something to eat. Do you have any food in the refrigerator?"

"There's bacon, eggs and some bread. The rest is beer," answered Colombo. "If you do not like it, we can order something."

"Right, wake Dr Mu up as well. He is probably feeling hungry now." Bei Tai turned to look at the bedroom. "Poor fellow. He got shocked and had to go through all that last night."

"As you said, he got shocked and had to go through all that. So, let him

sleep.” Colombo sighed. “Before he went to bed, I gave him a sleeping pill.”

Lun Tai came out of the toilet while holding onto a roll of newspaper in his hand. He tossed the newspaper onto the table.

“What happened?”

“What could happen? You were only inside for five minutes.” Bei Tai laughed. “What can happen in five minutes?”

“Don’t be careless, we are in an instance dungeon,” Lun Tai said seriously. “Where is Dr Mu?”

“Still sleeping,” answered Bei Tai. He waved and said, “Let the poor fellow sleep a little longer.”

“What about our ... guest?” asked Lun Tai. He moved into the guest room and opened the door.

Inside the room, Polly sat on the bed with a dazed look on her face. Lun Tai looked at her for a moment before turning to close the door. However, Polly suddenly shouted out, “Wait!”

“What is it?”

“I ... I want to go to the bathroom,” the woman shouted. “For God’s sake! Could it be that you won’t even allow me to go to the toilet?”

Lun Tai went over and lifted her up from the bed.

“Can you untie my ropes? What rope is this? They are so hard, my wrists are worn.”

“As long as you don’t struggle, your wrists will not get worn,” Lun Tai answered coldly. He did not untie her. Instead, he simply carried her out of the room and into the toilet. He placed her on top of the toilet bowl and said, “There is no need to untie the rope. Your hands can take off your pants. When you are done, call me.”

After saying that, Lun Tai closed the door.

“Crass bastard!” Polly swore at the door.

There was only a very narrow ventilation hole in the toilet. Looking at it, Polly sighed helplessly.

As she struggled to remove her belt, she failed to notice something. Behind her, a rope on the shower curtain moved lightly. It was as though it had been given life and the originally tied up rope unravelled and slid down from the shower curtain...

...

“How is it?”

Chen Xiaolian was stepping on the accelerator and the car sped along the road.

“My phone can’t get through to them!” Phoenix clenched her teeth and kept her phone.

Chen Xiaolian swore, “Damn it! Me too... I have already sent a message through the guild channel, but no one is responding!”

“We may have committed an error!” Phoenix quickly said, “Do you remember the last thing said by the vengeful spirit when we forced it to retreat?”

Naturally, Chen Xiaolian remembered.

The female ghost had said, “I have my eyes on you! I won’t let you escape me!”

Those words were said in English, thus the word used by the ghost was {you}.

In English, ‘you’ can be singular, but it can also be ‘plural.

Due to that, when Chen Xiaolian heard what the female ghost said, he thought she meant: ‘You people’ will not escape me.

But now...

“Clearly, the one she was after is a single person, not all of us,” said Phoenix, her face turning odd.

Chapter 194: I Won't Let You Escape Me!

“How much do you want? Is a big slab enough for you?” asked Bei Tai as he turned to look at Colombo. He was in the kitchen, holding on to a table knife as he sliced a loaf of bread.

Colombo stared at the TV screen. His face was a mask of surprise and he exclaimed, “Oh, my God! Come here quick! Something happened!”

Bei Tai came out while holding onto the table knife. He asked, “What happened?”

On the TV screen, the morning news was covering a special report. Depicted in the screen was the murder scene in Hanbury Street. A reporter was doing a live coverage of the news as he stood outside the police cordon.

The news got Lun Tai's attention as well and the three of them stood in the living room, staring at the TV screen.

At that same moment, in the kitchen, there was a row of sharp kitchen knives... a few among those sharp kitchen knives silently floated up. Seemingly under the control of an invisible force, the kitchen knives slowly turned so that their sharp blades faced the three people standing in the living room. Little by little, they floated over...

“What news is this?” Bei Tai grabbed a piece of bread and stuffed it into his mouth even as he was speaking.

“Hanbury Street! That is... that is the where the two of them were headed to find Black Annie! It seems... someone had been killed!”

Lun Tai's mind raced and he quickly opened up his system interface. Accessing the guild channel, he sent over a message.

“En? Message cannot be sent? What is going on?” Lun Tai's face sank and he said, “Make a call to the Guild Leader!”

Bei Tai quickly pulled out a mobile phone. Just as he was about to make the call...

Air piercing sounds suddenly echoed out from behind them!

As a veteran who had experienced various instance dungeons, Bei Tai was quick to react!

He quickly moved his body to the side and a sharp kitchen knife grazed past his neck!

The second knife came whizzing over and Bei Tai roared out loudly. His right hand, which was holding onto a table knife, was raised, and he deflected the incoming kitchen knife with a resounding “ding”. The deflected knife flew away and pierced itself into the wall. The hilt of the knife quivered!

“Big Bro!” Bei Tai shouted and saw that Lun Tai had, at an unknown moment jumped onto the sofa. The poor forensic doctor was pinned down beneath him.

“I’m fine!” Lun Tai spat out. A kitchen knife flew over, grazing his forehead before stabbing into the armrest area of the sofa.

“A ah!”

A wretched scream rang out from within the toilet!

Without showing any hesitation, Bei Tai charged forward. He pummelled through the door and broke into the toilet!

Entering the toilet, he saw that poor Polly had her neck firmly tied by the shower curtains rope. Her entire body was lifted up and her two legs trashed about in desperation. The towel rack was overturned as a result – the woman was probably in the middle of relieving herself and she had no time to even pull up her pants.

With a table knife in hand, Bei Tai pounced forward and sliced off the shower curtains rope. The woman fell heavily onto the floor, her face a mask of red as she desperately tried to breathe.

At the same time, Lun Tai pulled out the kitchen knife that was pierced into the sofa and he rushed toward the bedroom. With one kick, he forced open the door and entered.

Then, Lun Tai saw something shocking!

In the bedroom, Dr Mu was still asleep on the bed. Beside the bed, however, was a translucent vengeful spirit. The female spirit was right there beside the bed!

In her hand was a knife. The sharp blade of the knife was aimed right at Dr Mu's heart!

Lun Tai howled out and he threw the kitchen knife in his hand forward.

The female vengeful spirit abruptly turned around and the kitchen knife simple flew past her body to pierce into the bedroom's wall.

The female vengeful spirit opened her mouth and she screeched out at Lun Tai with a ferocious expression.

By then, Lun Tai had already pulled out the revolver placed in his belt.

It was the special revolver loaned to him by Phoenix!

Bang!

Bang bang!

Bang bang bang!

Lun Tai did not hesitate to pull the trigger. He unloaded all the bullets in one go without pause!

The bullets struck the female vengeful spirit's body and she shrieked out mournfully. Under the barrage of the bullets, her body was forced back before slamming onto the wall.

The bullets exploded upon her spirit body, creating several holes as a result.

Lun Tai had emptied the revolver's ammo and it issued out "ka ka" sounds.

The glow on the female vengeful spirit's translucent body dimmed considerably. Then, with a sharp wail, her body dissipated, transforming into fragments, which disappeared into the air.

Lun Tai grabbed hold of Dr Mu and pulled him out of the bed. He

slapped Dr Mu on the face and found that he could not wake Dr Mu up. Faced with no choice, he slung Dr Mu over his shoulders and ran out of the bedroom.

In the living room, Bei Tai had already pulled the poor Polly out from the toilet. Bei Tai had wrapped her up in a blanket.

As for Colombo, he was trembling as he attempted to shrink himself into the sofa.

“We need to get out of here, fast!” Lun Tai howled.

His decision was extremely correct!

Just as he finished shouting, a sharp scream rang out from within the bedroom.

The female vengeful spirit charged out from within the bedroom!

Lun Tai quickly retreated. While carrying Dr Mu to a corner, he used one hand to place a bullet into the revolver.

Bang!

A gunshot rang out and the bullet struck the vengeful spirit right in between her eyebrows. The female vengeful spirit shrieked out harshly; then, like a cold wind, her body disappeared into the wall of the living room!

“Hurry up and move!” shouted Lun Tai toward Colombo.

He handed Dr Mu over to Bei Tai. For Bei Tai, carrying both Dr Mu and Polly was not a problem. Lun Tai took the opportunity to quickly reload the revolver with the special bullets given by Phoenix.

They ran out of the apartment and arrived at the corridor outside.

“Take the stairs!” shouted Lun Tai. “It’s too dangerous to be taking the elevator! If the rope breaks, we’ll be doomed!”

Right as he finished speaking, he suddenly snapped his neck and dodged!

A knife shot at him from behind and nailed itself onto the wall area

next to his head!

The knife turned out to be a sharp scalpel!

“The Hell! Colombo! How many knives do you have in your house?”

Colombo was unable to stop himself from swearing, “Don’t forget, I am a bloody f**king doctor! A forensic doctor!”

“Hurry up! It’s coming again!”

Bei Tai turned to look at Colombo’s apartment. Floating in the air by the door was an assortment of sharp knives! There were table knives, kitchen knives and even a number of scalpels.

Lun Tai howled and retrieved an explosion-proof shield from his own storage equipment. Positioning the shield before him, he said, “I’ll guard the rear! Hurry!”

The three of them rushed down the stairs while Lun Tai held onto the explosion-proof shield, attempting to protect all of them. He was the last to descend.

The invisible force controlled the knives floating in the middle of the air and sent them flying forward. Occasionally, some would strike the shield and be deflected. However, the deflected knives would turn around in the middle of the air and shoot forward once more.

“Son of a bitch! It just keeps coming!” Lun Tai was enraged.

Unfortunately, he lacked the means to do anything against an enemy that remain concealed – his skill could not harm spirit entities.

They finally descended the building and arrived at the lobby. Bei Tai quickly charged out of the entrance and into the street.

It was early in the morning in London and no cars and people could be sighted in the street. It was only six in the morning after all and the sky had yet to brighten.

“Get to an open place!” Lun Tai shouted out from the back.

Bei Tai ran.

After running a few steps forward, they suddenly caught sight of something. A car that was parked by the road suddenly started up by itself. Next, the car came barrelling toward them like a wild animal!

“Damn it!”

Bei Tai was carrying two people on both his shoulders; he was unable to use his hands. Faced with no alternative, he leapt into the air! He soared up to a height of nearly two metres and vaulted across the top of the incoming car.

The car crashed into the window of a clothing store beside him.

Colombo screamed. Two pieces of broken glass fragment stabbed into his leg. Thankfully, Lun Tai who was behind came over and helped him up.

At the same time, the sound of roaring engine suddenly covered the street!

...

Chen Xiaolian stepped heavily down the throttle and the car swerved into a drift through the intersection!

The doors of the car were abruptly opened and both Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix rushed out from their respective sides.

Chen Xiaolian rolled on the ground a few times before jumping up. His feet pushed and he was propelled forward.

His hand was carrying the door of the car that he had torn off!

Just like how one would throw a discus, he threw forth the door!

The door fell behind Lun Tai. Tens of sharp knives could be seen stabbing onto the surface of the door!

“Hurry up and run!” Chen Xiaolian shouted.

At that instant, the vengeful spirit’s body quickly appeared from the window upstairs. It let out a sharp howl.

It was like a screaming witch that one would often see in movies. Its

harsh scream caused all the windows in the street to shatter.

Countless glass fragments flew into the air before shooting toward them!

Phoenix's body was flying in the air. Like a gust of wind, she descended in between Lun Tai and Bei Tai. She quickly said, "Get down!"

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai threw themselves down. Lun Tai reached out and pressed Colombo down onto the ground.

Phoenix extended both hands out. The fingers on both her hands shone with light and a silver coloured light enveloped the three of them like a shield.

An intense sound rang out as countless glass fragments descended like blades. They struck the protective sphere like arrows, creating a sound that resembled those heard when frying beans.

Chen Xiaolian ran until he was before the door of a shop overlooking the street...

The shattered glass fragments swept through half the street like a tempest!

When the intense sound finally came to an end, the female vengeful spirit up above them charged down. As she was flying through the air, she spread open her arms and revealed her sharp fingers. They were akin to sharp swords, which stabbed toward Phoenix!

Phoenix pulled up the side of her clothes and she abruptly pulled out a gun from her belt!

It seemed that her belt was a storage equipment. As for the gun she retrieved from it, it turned out to be a uniquely shaped rifle.

Bang!

One shot!

Three bullets!

The bullets exploded outward. The incoming vengeful spirit ended up

flying into the barrage of bullets and was thrown back!

At the same time, Phoenix's other hand came out. She pulled a one-metre-long wooden stick out from her belt and used it to strike the ground!

BOOM!

A silver coloured arc of light spread out instantly, enveloping the whole street!

The arc of light enveloped the vengeful spirit that was thrown back, causing smoke to erupt out of her spirit body! It was as though something was being burnt!

Finally, she screamed and her body retreated, disappearing into a dark alley.

"I won't let you escape from me!"

Chapter 195: A Specific Person

“I think, this time around, the word {you} that she said means ‘you people’.”

Phoenix extended out her hand to help pull Chen Xiaolian up from the ground.

Chen Xiaolian was lying behind the door of a shop. The wooden door was knocked down by him when he fell and his body was presently lying in the middle of a pile of sawdust.

“At a time like this, you can still joke?” Chen Xiaolian looked at the young woman.

Phoenix held onto the large rifle and slung it casually over her shoulder. Then, she replied, “Why not? It’s not as though we lost anything.”

Chen Xiaolian stood up and brushed off the glass fragments and sawdust on his body.

The sharp sound of siren could be heard coming from the distance.

“We need to leave this place as soon as possible. If we get entangled with the police, the situation will only worsen,” said Chen Xiaolian. He looked at Phoenix before speaking to Lun Tai who was standing some distance away, “How is it?”

Lun Tai patted the unconscious Dr Mu and said, “Nothing... just this friend of yours. Something doesn’t seem right, he is unconscious.”

Bei Tai smiled as he regarded Colombo. “Our forensic doctor here is also fine... thankfully; he did not piss his pants.”

“... I was THIS close!” Colombo had a wretched face and he raised his head to look at his apartment. He screamed, “My apartment! DAMN IT!”

“We will compensate you for your losses,” said Bei Tai as he pulled the forensic doctor up.

Chen Xiaolian brought out a car from his Storage Watch.

Following a beam of light, a durable seven-seat Land Rover appeared on

the side of the street.

Colombo became dumbfounded at the sight. "This... how did this appear? Is this magic?"

"We are not from Hogwarts," answered Bei Tai. He took hold of the forensic doctor and pulled him into the SUV. As for Lun Tai, he carried Dr Mu and followed right behind them.

The driver role was given to Lun Tai while Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix both sat in the second row.

The SUV then drove off the street.

Inside, Chen Xiaolian held onto Phoenix's rifle and he carefully inspected it. It was a shotgun; extracting one of the bullets, he saw that they were all specially made silver pellets.

"These weapons were all self-made by you people?" Chen Xiaolian asked after returning the rifle to Phoenix.

"We try to save up what we can. Purchasing items from the Exchange System requires points after all," Phoenix replied coolly.

"Right, your gun," Lun Tai tossed over the revolver without looking over. Phoenix glanced at Chen Xiaolian and handed the gun to him. She said, "You all can use it first. You do not have any weapon against spirit entities."

"Thank you," Chen Xiaolian sincerely expressed his thanks. He accepted the gun and handed it to Bei Tai.

"Earlier, the move you used last against the vengeful spirit; is that magic?" asked Chen Xiaolian as he looked at Phoenix. "That stick you pulled out, is that a magic staff? That silver arc of light..."

"Holy Light skill," Phoenix did not hold anything back and she answered. "It is the most cost-effective spell to use against evil spirits. However, its damage may not be sufficient when going against high-level evil spirits."

"You are a magic-type?" Bei Tai suddenly asked.

Phoenix turned to look back at Bei Tai who was seated in the last row. She said, "You people ask too many questions."

"Sorry," Bei Tai apologized. He was someone who understood the rules. For Awakened ones, their skills was their final trump card. It was not something that they would easily reveal.

"You'd better get in contact with your team members. Don't let them return to the apartment."

"I know."

...

A few minutes later, Phoenix contacted her team members and they all chose a place to convene.

The location was suggested by Phoenix.

After her Coffeehouse Guild came to London, they rented a storage warehouse in a secluded area to be used as a base.

After the huge commotion they caused in the street before Colombo's apartment, the police would surely have gotten involved. If they were to go to a hotel now, they would only be inviting trouble for themselves.

A warehouse for storing goods was quite a good place to hide for the time being.

By the time they arrived at the warehouse, the other team members had already arrived.

The Titan twins were standing guard by the entrance. After the car carrying Chen Xiaolian's group entered the warehouse, the Titan brothers moved to close the doors of the warehouse.

"This was originally a warehouse for the terminal. However, its business has now declined and this warehouse is left vacant for now. If not for the fact that we were short on time, I would have bought it up." Phoenix brought them into the warehouse.

Inside the warehouse, both Dagger and Monster were sitting on a stone block respectively. Dagger had a dagger in one hand as he carefully

trimmed his nails.

As for Monster, he had an apple in one hand. He carefully ripped out a small portion of it and fed it to his monkey, bit by bit. Despite his towering constitution, he chose to keep such a small pet.

The monkey grabbed a small piece of the apple and munched down on it. Occasionally, it would glance at Chen Xiaolian and grin, exposing its teeth in the process.

“Where is she?” Phoenix asked.

“In the lounge.”

There was a small lounge here.

Inside the room was a single bed. Upon the bed was a single woman who appeared much younger than Polly. Her hair was a clearly dyed, golden in colour, and she wore very alluring pyjamas. Eye shadow makeup that had yet to be washed off could be seen on her face.

“When we found her, she was doing it with some guy.” Dagger came to stand in the doorway and he leaned against the doorframe. “We could only knock her out and bring her over.”

Phoenix nodded her head.

Lun Tai carried Polly over and placed her on the bed beside the other woman. Polly had also lost consciousness due to fright.

Chen Xiaolian observed the surroundings and accidentally caught sight of an old type of TV placed on a table. Unfortunately, the reception was not too good and grains plagued the screen.

“Heavens, I haven’t seen this antique in years.” Chen Xiaolian pointed at the CRT TV. He could not restrain himself from laughing out.

“The truth is, many people still lead conservative lives in London,” Phoenix replied. She switched the TV channel to a news channel.

The news channel in the TV was reporting on world news. It appeared that the incident earlier had yet to be reported.

“Now, we need to sort out the clues!” said Phoenix as she turned to Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and said, “I agree!”

He turned his attention to Lun Tai and asked, “Back then, what happened in Colombo’s house?”

Lun Tai thought it through and considered what to say for a while. After that, he did his best to narrate what happened in the shortest and most accurate manner.

“... right after we run out of the lobby, you arrived,” Lun Tai finished speaking and looked at Chen Xiaolian in the eye. “As for what happened after that, you two saw it for yourself.”

“En.” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head and he looked at Phoenix.

“I have a question,” asked a frowning Phoenix: “You mean to say that... back in the apartment, Polly was in the toilet, Doctor Mu was in the room, and you three were in the living room. All three sides were attacked at around the same time?”

“Something like that.” Lun Tai considered it and said, “I feel that... the vengeful spirit was likely feinting. She attacked us who were in the living room and Dr Mu who was in the bedroom. Her target was probably Polly, who was in the toilet.”

“Right. When I rushed into the toilet, I saw that the woman was almost strangled to death by a shower curtain rope,” Bei Tai said. “If not for my quick reaction, she would already have died.”

“However, we have another question that we cannot explain.”

Chen Xiaolian stroked his head and said, “The vengeful spirit who was attacking you in the apartment... she is clearly not the one from the subway station last night.”

This was a very critical issue!

Lun Tai, Bei Tai, Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix. The four of them had seen the vengeful spirit from the subway station before.

And earlier, they had also seen the vengeful spirit that appeared in the apartment.

Although she had the figure of a woman... she was not the same one!

“Appearance wise, she is different. Furthermore... even though the vengeful spirit have a near transparent spirit body and have no colour on them, last night I had encountered Black Annie in the park,” Chen Xiaolian sighed. “Unexpectedly... I recognize her! The vengeful spirit who attacked us earlier... her appearance and the appearance of Black Annie who appeared at the park entrance yesterday night... were similar. Although it was only a quick glance, I can confirm that they are the same!”

“I agree,” Phoenix said. “I also saw Black Anne last night.”

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai were waiting in ambush last night. Unlike Chen Xiaolian, they did not encounter Black Annie. Thus, they did not say anything about it.

“I... I think I can confirm it too.”

Colombo, who had been standing timidly by the side, said, “Last night, I also saw that woman.”

“So, now comes the question.”

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath, and then he slowly said, “Let’s assume that the vengeful spirit in the subway station from back then had attacked us because we happened to be at the murder scene. The vengeful spirit was formed after the victim died and she will attack whomever she sees... this is somewhat plausible.

“However... Black Annie did not die in the apartment! She died far away in another street. Logically speaking, her death had no connection to us... even though Phoenix and I had gone to her murder scene, why would her vengeful spirit run all the way to the apartment to attack you all?”

This was an issue that did not make any sense!

Within the lounge, both Lun Tai and Bei Tai did not say anything. They

quietly looked at Chen Xiaolian – it appeared that they have full confidence in their Guild Leader.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and pointed at Phoenix. He said, “Guild Leader Phoenix and I made a speculation on our way to the apartment. Last night, back in the subway station, the female vengeful spirit said something before disappearing: ‘I won’t let you escape me’.

“As we all know, in English, {you} can mean you. But it can also mean ‘you people’. It can be used for both singular and plural.

“Last night, when we heard those words in the subway station, we thought that the female vengeful spirit had meant to say ‘I won’t let you people go’ – the ‘you people’ here means all of us.

“However, there is another possibility. When the female vengeful spirit said {you}, she simply meant ‘you’! This meant that she was targeting a specific person among us!”

Phoenix’s eyes flickered and she said, “I agree with Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian’s deduction. Additionally... let’s recall back to what happened last night back in the subway station.

“Back then... the female vengeful spirit appeared. However, she did not attack me and Chen Xiaolian. Even when Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian took the initiative to attack the vengeful spirit, the vengeful spirit did not fight back. Instead, she went pass Chen Xiaolian’s body and went straight toward...”

After saying that, Phoenix raised a hand to point at a person.

“ME?” Lun Tai was shocked.

“No, not you,” said Phoenix. She slowly nudged her finger away from Lun Tai. “Back then, it appeared that the vengeful spirit was going after you... at that time however, you were holding onto someone... someone that we should be protecting!”

Her finger came to point at Dr Mu!

Dr Mu was still unconscious. His body leaned against a shabby chair as

he slept.

In an instant, everyone became silent!

Chapter 196: Don't Trust Me

“The one that the subway station’s vengeful spirit was after is Dr Mu? How could that be?” Bei Tai exclaimed. “He... isn’t he... an ordinary person? Also, he is the system’s guide character.

“Is it because he touched the deceased’s body? The first to touch it? Because he appeared at the scene of murder, he incited the hatred of the vengeful spirit?

“This is one bitch ass puzzle.”

Bei Tai exclaimed.

“I have a speculation,” Lun Tai slowly said. He extended a hand to pat his younger brother’s shoulder before continuing, “The key issue is not just why the subway station’s vengeful spirit would attack Dr Mu. Rather... why did the vengeful spirit of Black Annie appear in the apartment to attack Dr Mu?”

There was a very solemn expression on Lun Tai’s face and he said, “If we are to look at it this way... perhaps, our earlier deduction was wrong. Back in the apartment, the vengeful spirit spread out her attacks to distract us. But her true target is Dr Mu?

“But why would Black Annie attack Dr Mu? She was killed in another place. Logically speaking, there is no connection with Dr Mu.”

Chen Xiaolian frowned. “Maybe this is just a speculation, or maybe we were wrong...”

“Maybe he’s Jack the Ripper!”

The one who said that was Dagger.

The moment he said those words, everyone fell silent.

“Did you forget? The conclusion we obtained after analysing this matter is that Jack the Ripper is someone highly familiar with medical surgery! This fellow is a doctor to begin with! Additionally, back in the subway station, he was the first to appear at the scene of murder. When we

arrived at the scene, he was already there beside the corpse. Who knows, the one who committed the deed might be him!”

“Impossible.” Chen Xiaolian shook his head and said, “When Black Annie died, Dr Mu was not at the scene. He was in the apartment!”

“That is correct. We can bear witness to that. Dr Mu did not leave the apartment,” Lun Tai said.

“Maybe he knows magic, or maybe he knows witchcraft. He could even have a doppelganger skill or perhaps his soul can leave his body!” Dagger shouted. “Isn’t it clear? This is simply a trick by the instance dungeon! The murderer has always been by our side!”

As he spoke, he pulled out a short blade and moved toward Dr Mu with a face filled with killing intent.

Chen Xiaolian quickly stepped forward to stand before him. With a heavy looking face, he asked, “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Kill him!” Dagger raised his eyebrows. “Perhaps by killing him, we can complete the quest! He is the murderer!”

“Can you be certain on that?” Chen Xiaolian sneered.

“... ..” Dagger clenched his teeth and shouted, “Move aside!”

“Idiot,” said Lun Tai who was standing by the side. “Did you forget what the system said? Dr Mu is the guide character! We need to ensure his survival! His death equates to our quest’s FAILURE!”

“... .. then we won’t kill him. We’ll just torture him first! Hmph!” Dagger gritted his teeth and continued, “Maim both his arms and legs! As long as he does not die, that is fine! Without both his hands and legs, we’ll see if he can still do anything!”

“If you even touch him, I will maim both your arms and legs.” Chen Xiaolian forcefully pushed Dagger away, forcing him to take a few steps back.

“You bloody dare to touch me?!” A murderous intent emanated out from Dagger’s expression. He stepped forward and stabbed. His dagger shot

toward Chen Xiaolian's throat!

Ding!

Chen Xiaolian was quick to summon out his Fearless War Axe to deflect the incoming dagger. He then followed up with a Head Cleaver attack!

Dagger quickly retreated. He flew backward by a few steps and was about to charge forward again...

"Enough! Stop it!"

Phoenix's figure appeared behind Dagger. She had one hand out as she held down Dagger's shoulder. Her fingers gripped tightly and she pulled Dagger back a few steps: "Dagger, you are being too impulsive!"

"I..." Dagger's eyes darted to the side as he looked at Phoenix. "Guild Leader! Why do you keep helping these outsiders?"

Phoenix narrowed her eyes and she looked at Dagger. Then, she said in a cool voice, "Are you accusing me of being unfair?"

"... .. I did not say that!" Dagger's neck snapped straight, his face turning red. "Is my deduction wrong? He is just an ordinary person. If the system does not allow us to kill him, then we can let him live. It is fine if we just cripple him! As for our suspicions, as long as we cripple him, he would no longer pose any threat! Is there anything wrong with what I am saying?"

Phoenix knitted her eyebrows. She looked at Dagger and turned to look at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian coolly said, "He may be just an ordinary person to you all. However, I am acquainted with him. He had helped my friend before. I will not allow you to touch him!"

No matter what, Chen Xiaolian believed that the Dr Mu that he knew was a good person. Furthermore, he was also acquainted with Dr Mu – he feel that someone as good as Dr Mu should not end up getting hurt just because of a guess.

Another way of looking at it would be that he could not be like Dagger... just because he was an Awakened, he could view other ordinary humans as lambs that he could slaughter whenever he wished to.

Chen Xiaolian could not accept this form of mentality.

Phoenix lowered her eyes. Without looking at Chen Xiaolian's eyes, she took a deep breath and said, "Then, let's compromise."

"What do you suggest?"

"Dr Mu... we can choose not to harm him. However, he must be closely guarded," Phoenix said with a heavy tone. "Although Dagger was being impulsive, I believe that there is some truth to his deduction.

"Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian, maybe this Dr Mu is your friend.

"However, you have to understand... he is not our friend.

"This is a quest that we must all complete. If anything goes wrong, you may be willing to bear the consequences. However, we have no obligation to accompany you as you endure the consequences."

"I understand." Chen Xiaolian sighed. After pondering it for a moment, he said, "Lun Tai, Bei Tai, find a way to wake up Dr Mu... then, in the following time period, you two will be responsible for guarding him! Understand?"

Lun Tai was a very meticulous person. He was able to quickly grasp what Chen Xiaolian meant.

There were two meanings to guarding. The first, keep an eye on Dr Mu to ensure that there was nothing abnormal with him. The second, protect him from harm.

"All right, leave it to us."

Phoenix watched as Chen Xiaolian gave the orders and she smiled. "Well then... we'll leave it at that for now."

Dagger took a step back. Then, he stood by the doorway and threw a cold stare at Chen Xiaolian. He abruptly raised an arm to perform a throat slitting action.

Without showing any fear, Chen Xiaolian stared back. Then, Dagger turned around and walked out of the lounge.

“Can we have a discussion in private, Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian?” Phoenix looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“Sure.”

...

At the roof of the warehouse, Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix found a clean place to sit down.

Phoenix pulled out a bottle of wine from her storage belt. She waved it and handed it to Chen Xiaolian. “Have a drink?”

Chen Xiaolian looked at it. Without showing any hesitation or concern, he accepted the bottle of wine and gulped down a big mouthful.

“Are you not afraid that I had poisoned it or something?” Phoenix smiled as she observed Chen Xiaolian.

“Guild Leader Phoenix, I have great deal of respect toward you,” said Chen Xiaolian as he looked at Phoenix. “The things that happened back then have proven your sincerity toward our cooperation. That is why I trust you.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian deliberately smiled. He pointed toward the bottom of the roof and said, “It’s just that some of your team members appear unfriendly toward us.”

Phoenix sighed gently. She took back the bottle of wine from Chen Xiaolian, wiped the top of the bottle and took a small gulp herself.

The wine entered her throat and Phoenix sighed. After swallowing the wine, she frowned and smiled wryly. “I really do not understand. Why do you men like to drink wine. It tastes so pungent.”

“Men are not the only one who likes to drink wine,” said Chen Xiaolian. He glanced at her and said, “Didn’t you say that a good girl does not drink wine?”

“Occasionally, even good girls would want to drink wine.” Phoenix

shrugged her shoulders.

She turned her attention to the distance... it was presently morning. The sun had come out and was hanging in the sky.

"It's really rare to be able to see such a good weather in London," said Phoenix. She observed the distant sky and suddenly said, "Actually, Dagger... he is not opposing you."

"Eh?"

"He is opposing me," Phoenix said softly. "In one of the previous instance dungeons before this, something happened to my guild."

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything... he felt that it was not right to ask about other people's affairs.

However, it appeared that Phoenix did not intend to stop talking. She kept observing the distant sky and said with a calm and slow voice.

"In one of the previous instance dungeons, our guild lost three comrades. Two of them were very close to Dagger. One was his bro, and the other was his... woman." Phoenix smiled wryly. "The last person to die is our Guild Leader... en, more accurately, our former Guild Leader."

Chen Xiaolian was stunned.

"Thus, I am a new Guild Leader." Phoenix smiled softly and continued, "If my guess is correct, your situation should be roughly the same. After Qiu Yun's death, you accepted the Guild Leader position. This should have happened only recently."

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

"Perhaps it was due to the death of his friend and woman, Dagger placed the blame on me... because, in the instance dungeon, he believed that I made some mistakes when giving orders, leading to deaths... personally, I did not think so. However... I have no excuse. Human emotions cannot be measured using reason," Phoenix said coolly.

"Perhaps there is another reason. After the former Guild Leader died, he was not satisfied that I was the one to become the new Guild Leader. Of

course, he has quite the qualifications. Perhaps, there are some hidden factors there.”

Chen Xiaolian remained silent.

Phoenix suddenly asked him, “Have you suffered from a team member’s death before... I mean, after you become the Guild Leader.”

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment.

Does Nicole count? Although she was just a temporary member, but... she should count as one.

“Yes,” Chen Xiaolian slowly said. “In the previous instance dungeon, we lost a very outstanding guild member. It could be said that she had used her life to save us all in the end and kill off a very strong enemy.”

“Your guild members... did they not question your leadership?” Phoenix looked at Chen Xiaolian. “You are lucky. We are both young, both new Guild Leaders... yet, your guild members never questioned you? Thinking about it, your situation is much better than mine.”

“Everyone had their own issues to deal with,” Chen Xiaolian replied vaguely.

“Our old Guild Leader had always taken very good care of me,” Phoenix said slowly. “Thus, the other guild members had always viewed me differently. Some chose to express it, like Dagger, while others chose not to express it...”

“The old Guild Leader was a senior that I know of. A few years back, both of us were sucked into an instance dungeon and we became Awakened ones. I would always call him uncle. But, he is actually one of my teachers... I studied arts and he is a very famous painter.

“I became his student at the age of fifteen. Since then, I have been following him and learning to draw from him.

“After becoming an Awakened, he took very good care of me. This level of care, in the eyes of the other guild members, might be a form of unfairness.”

“I think that’s very fair... everyone has people who are close to them...”
Chen Xiaolian tried to comfort her.

“... ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!” Phoenix suddenly burst out in laughter. Her laugh was as bright as the sun. However, a strange light seemingly shone out from her eyes.

“What are you laughing at? Were you just messing with me?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“You are really naïve,” said Phoenix. She suddenly picked up the bottle of wine and gulped down a big mouthful. Perhaps it was because she was drinking too quickly, she ended up choking and coughing a few times. Her charming cheeks turned red.

Suddenly, Phoenix violently threw the bottle of wine down onto the ground. It hit the ground and shattered apart.

“Chen Xiaolian! You are too naïve! Your kind-heartedness is unbefitting of one who has to live in this game!”

Phoenix’s eyes suddenly became cold!

“Let me tell you! That old Guild Leader, my teacher... the reason he treated me so differently is because he had always had an interest in me!

“At that time, I was only fifteen years old! As for him, he was even older than my father!

“There had been many instances where he tried to take advantage of me! In the beginning, I could only resist and run... furthermore, I was very fearful, because he was very strong. I knew that if I were to forcefully resist, I would not be a match for him. I would only anger him and make him angry.

“I could only pretend to be a young, simple-minded person who did not understand the implications of his hints... I used that method to deal with it, to avoid, to resist and to protect myself!

“Fortunately, it appeared that he enjoyed those actions of toying with his prey! Thus, I was able to protect myself for a very long time and he did

not get to do what he wanted.

“Do you know? Every night, when I am sleeping, I would hide a knife under my pillow!

“Externally, he appeared to be looking out for me with the utmost care. However, he was actually suppressing me so that I will not have the opportunity to enhance my strength. Him caring for me was simply to tell others not to have any interest toward me, I am his private property, a pet!

“No! Truth be told, he had been suppressing the strength of all the other guild members! All in order to ensure that his strength could have a suppressive and overwhelming authority!

“I could only secretly use every method I could think of to secretly enhance my own strength under his very eyes.

“I have always been living like a frightened rat! Facing a cat that is always wanting to eat me, I can only carefully preserve myself and carefully enhance my strength little by little...

“Later though, he gradually lost his patience. He became increasingly furious toward my resistance and refusal.

“Do you know how he died in the end?”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

Phoenix took a deep breath, her eyes turning colder and colder!

“He finally lost his patience. In the previous instance dungeon, when we were resting, I refused his secret approach. He became furious and attempted to... forcefully rape me!”

“... ..” Chen Xiaolan was stunned and he looked at Phoenix.

Phoenix suddenly produced a dagger in her palm. It was a near invisible looking dagger.

“I pretended to be fearful, pretending to not have the desire to fight back, made him let his guard down... then, I took advantage of the time when he was taking off his clothes to use this dagger and STAB his neck,

cutting off his throat!”

After saying that, Phoenix sneered, “That fellow, even in death, he failed to get me! I created an illusion to make everyone think that he died in the hands of a monster from the instance dungeon.

“After the instance dungeon ended, I became the most powerful one in the guild!

“You know? After the instance dungeon ended and I returned home, the first thing I did was to lock myself up in the shower room. I washed myself tens of times! I finally washed away the fear that has been suppressing my heart for years!

Chen Xiaolian was at a loss for words.

Phoenix fiercely stabbed the dagger down the floor between the two of them!

“You... why are you telling me all these?” Chen Xiaolian looked into the young woman’s eyes.

“I am telling you to not be so naïve and kind-hearted,” Phoenix sneered. “Don’t be too trustful of anyone – that is, if you wish to live longer within this game.”

...

Chapter 197: Savage Pub

“He is still not awake?” After re-entering the lounge, Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Dr Mu who was still lying on the sofa.

Lun Tai frowned and said, “I tried calling him up. I even splashed his face with water, but it is not working.”

Chen Xiaolian furrowed his eyebrows and he moved to Dr Mu’s side.

Things were getting stranger and stranger!

Dr Mu was still asleep. He was breathing at a uniform rate and it appeared as though there was no abnormality. Yet, they could not wake him up.

It was day time and the two women they brought with them had woken up.

Polly was emotionally agitated. She was almost strangled to death in the toilet within Colombo’s apartment after all. She felt that her life was in danger and she shouted for a good while.

As for the other woman – she was also the last recorded victim in the historical records.

Mary Jane Kelly.

She was much younger compared to the other victims at only twenty-six years old.

Although they had the same occupation... clearly, she was living a much better life compared to the other older victims.

It was obvious from the highly *** that she was wearing.

After waking up, the woman immediately screamed out loudly. However, Bei Tai shut her up by scaring her with a gun.

Chen Xiaolian was feeling vexed and he was not able to bring himself to go comfort the women.

He told Lun Tai, “Keep an eye on them. Make sure you have them in

your sight at all times.”

“Even if they’re going to the toilet?” Lun Tai smiled wryly.

“Even if they are going to the toilet!” Chen Xiaolian nodded seriously.

...

In the day.

The old CRT TV began broadcasting the news.

The street before Dr Colombo’s apartment appeared in the news.

According to the news anchor, the police suspected that this was a terrorist attack. There was suspicion that the said terrorist had used some form of bomb in the attack.

Presently however, no organization had stepped forth to claim responsibility for this incident.

The whole street was engulfed in confusion.

It was not long before the police seemingly found some clues. The investigators at the scene found Colombo’s apartment.

The forensic doctor was considered either missing or kidnapped...

Or...

“Am I going to be labelled as a terrorist?” Worry was etched on Colombo’s face.

Researching Jack the Ripper’s case was merely his hobby. Nobody would want their future career to be ruined due to a hobby.

“Can I leave?” Colombo pitifully asked.

The request was utterly rejected.

At a time like this, neither Chen Xiaolian nor Phoenix would allow Colombo to leave – doing so would bring the police to them.

The forensic doctor expressed his dissatisfaction. However, he did not have any strength to resist.

“We will compensate you for all the damages you have incurred.”

The approach Phoenix used to comfort Colombo was to simply produce a box of money.

“Additionally, we can guarantee that after this matter ends, there will not be any trouble on your end,” Chen Xiaolian assured Colombo.

He deduced that if everything were to go according to the rules of the instance dungeon... then, once this London instance dungeon ended, the system would refresh everything – just like what happened to Tokyo.

During the day, Chen Xiaolian had asked Bei Tai to do something.

Bei Tai then left the warehouse for a few hours before returning.

He brought something from the outside and gave it to Chen Xiaolian.

In the evening, Chen Xiaolian retrieved some food from his Storage Watch and distributed them for everyone.

After that, Phoenix came over.

“Let’s go.”

“En.” Chen Xiaolian nodded his head. He stuffed the bread he was holding into his mouth and stood up.

They had discussed things through in the afternoon. The first thing they would do at night was to go to the Savage Pub to find the final victim that they had yet to find.

Considering how Jack the Ripper had only committed his crimes in the night, there was the possibility that the woman was still alive.

Catherine Eddowes, nicknamed Kate.

This was the last victim that they had yet to find. According to Polly, she might appear at a place known as the Savage Pub.

During the day, the murder of Black Annie was reported. In the news report, the police reported that the time of death of the deceased was between morning and dawn. In other words, it should be at around five in the morning.

It was probably not long after Chen Xiaolian and the others left the

park.

Black Annie had probably failed to find business. Then, on the way back, she was dragged into the shrub fence and killed.

The result of the discussion between Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix was: Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix would head out to the Savage Bar and look for Catherine Eddowes. As for the others, they would stay behind to ensure the safety of the guide character, Dr Mu and also protect the other two surviving victims.

“Even if we fail to find Catherine Eddowes, with two surviving victims here, there is a chance that we could bait out Jack the Ripper.”

Phoenix did not reject this strategy from Chen Xiaolian.

Before leaving, Chen Xiaolian patted on Lun Tai’s shoulders and whispered in his ear.

“Be careful of the fellow known as Dagger... and also...” Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment before continuing, “Also be careful of Dr Mu.”

Lun Tai glanced at Chen Xiaolian and nodded his head.

...

“The one in the subway station should be the first victim. The second victim should be Polly. However, she is under our protection, so Jack the Ripper skipped over Polly and killed the third victim, Black Annie.

“As for the one we are looking for, Catherine Eddowes, she is the fourth victim in the historical records... according to the sequence of murder, after killing Black Annie, he would be going after Catherine Eddowes.”

While they were in the car, Chen Xiaolian drove while talking to Phoenix.

“If we are to put it that way... do you think that the one attacking the apartment during the day was not Jack the Ripper? It was the vengeful spirit?” Phoenix asked.

“Is there a problem?” Chen Xiaolian asked.

“There is a big problem there.” Phoenix turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. “If that is what you think... then, you have been secretly suspecting Dr Mu. If Jack the Ripper was the one to attack the apartment, then his first target should be Polly. If it was the vengeful spirit, then... the first target would be Dr Mu.

“If the first target is Dr Mu... this thought process of yours meant that you have been suspecting him.”

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything. He merely held on tightly onto the steering wheel.

...

The Savage Pub was located not far away from the Whitechapel area. In the streets of London where there were various pubs of varying sizes, there was nothing special about the Savage Pub.

Additionally, as the only pub located in the east side of London, this was clearly a place for low-end clientele. The furnishing were rather dilapidated and the size of the door was not that big either.

Walking inside, they found that the space was not small. However, the air was filled with the scent of tobacco, alcohol and cheap perfume.

A TV was fixed onto the wall, showing that a football game was under way. Chen Xiaolian did not pay any attention as to which teams were currently competing.

There were a considerable number of people inside the pub – perhaps it was due to the economic depression, leading to a high number of people turning to alcohol to relieve their worries.

Standing behind the bar was a man with thick figure and tattooed arms. He sported a beard and he was wiping a beer cup with a cloth.

“Good evening,” Chen Xiaolian said as he stood before the bar.

Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix’s faces and their clean clothing made them appear somewhat out of place within this slightly dirty establishment.

The man behind the bar looked at the two of them with a suspicious

gaze. He asked, "What do you two need?"

"Beer." Chen Xiaolian pulled out a bill and placed it on the table. He turned to Phoenix and asked, "You?"

"Good girls do not drink," Phoenix replied with a faint smile. "The rooftop moment is over."

"Then give her a glass of water." Chen Xiaolian shrugged his shoulders.

Beer and water were soon placed on the surface of the bar.

"You people are students? Foreign tourists?" Seeing how they were ordering, the man behind the bar showed a slightly more amiable attitude: "I am the owner here. If you need anything, just tell me."

"We are looking for a person," said Chen Xiaolian. He quietly placed a bill on the surface of the bar.

The owner hesitated momentarily. He stared at Chen Xiaolian's fair face and turned to look at Phoenix – he probably thought they were not police, considering their age, and eased up his sense of vigilance.

He picked up the bill and grinned, revealing his teeth that had turned yellow from cigarettes. "I am very familiar with this place."

"Catherine Eddowes," Chen Xiaolian quickly said in a low tone of voice. "She has a nickname, Kate. I think you should probably know her."

The owner froze for a moment. He looked at Chen Xiaolian's young looking face and smiled. He said, "Kate? Of course I know her... however, why are you asking about her?"

It appeared that he had misunderstood something. He then leaned forward and moved his mouth close to Chen Xiaolian's ears. He whispered, "If you are looking for a woman... I might be able to introduce an even better one for you. Kate... for someone like you, she is probably a little too old. If you see her, you might not like her."

Pausing, the owner pointed at a blonde woman sitting in a corner. He said, "What do you think about her? She is much younger than Kate. Additionally... hehe, you understand."

Chen Xiaolian did not say anything.

“Merely fifty pounds,” the owner continued whispering.

“In addition to opening this pub, you also work as a part-time pimp?”

Chen Xiaolian smiled.

The owner did not appear to mind and he coolly replied, “Both men and women need to eat. How about it? Are you interested? This woman and Kate are both under me.”

“Thanks ... but I still want to look for Kate. Can you find her?”

The owner froze up for a moment, then he clutched his head and muttered, “The Hell ... how could such a young kid end up liking that old Kate?”

However, for the sake of the money, the owner informed him, “She usually comes over at around eight o’clock. She will drink about two cups in here and look around to see if she can find any sleepy customers. If she can find, they’ll go back... you understand, don’t you? If she can’t find any... she will probably go to the street in front to look for business.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at the time. It was almost eight o’clock.

At that moment, the door of the pub was suddenly opened and a woman stepped inside.

“Dawson, you old scoundrel! Hurry up and give me a cup! Make sure it’s strong!”

Chapter 198: Who Could It Be?

The woman who walked in had a slightly bloated body. She was also rather short.

Even though the weather was cold, she had the lapels of her coat opened considerably. Despite her slight chubbiness, the size of her breasts was quite stunning.

Even before she reached the bar, Chen Xiaolian could smell the thick scent of cheap perfume.

The owner quickly threw a look at Chen Xiaolian. The meaning behind his glance was clear as day: The one you are looking for is here.

Chen Xiaolian quickly got up from the bar's chair and moved forward.

"Catherine Eddowes?" Chen Xiaolian approached her.

The woman looked at Chen Xiaolian before glancing at Phoenix who was standing beside him.

Suddenly, the normal expression on her face changed!

An expression of panic and fear appeared on her face!

Then... the woman let out a cry, abruptly turned around and ran!

"Hey!" called Chen Xiaolian. He was about to give chase when a hand reached out from behind the bar to grab his arm.

The pub owner was glaring harshly at Chen Xiaolian. He asked, "Hey, just who are you people? Why did Kate appear so fearful of you people? Are you here to look for trouble?"

"Move aside!"

Chen Xiaolian snapped back his arm and the pub owner was flung out from inside the bar. As he fell, he smashed onto a chair by the side.

"Damn it!"

Two muscular men who were sitting by the entrance to the pub quickly sprang to their feet. Next, they charged forward, shouting, "You're asking

for it, kid!”

One of them had pulled out a dagger.

Without showing any hesitation, Chen Xiaolian rushed forward. He delivered a kick upon one of the incoming fellows, knocking him out. The resulting momentum also caused him to flip over. The other fellow attempted to execute a bear hug from behind. Chen Xiaolian shouted, “Phoenix!”

Phoenix was quick to catch on. Like a gust of wind, she dashed out of the pub doors.

Chen Xiaolian threw a backhand punch and the fellow behind him was sent flying due to the impact. His body slammed into the wall as a result. As for Chen Xiaolian, he turned away and ran out of the pub to give chase.

Rushing out of the pub, he saw that Phoenix had already caught Kate. They were standing across the street near a junction.

Kate was just an ordinary person. Additionally, she was also slightly fat and she was wearing high heels. Under such circumstances, if she was capable of outrunning Phoenix, Chen Xiaolian could only say that a huge BUG had occurred in the system.

Chen Xiaolian quickly ran over toward their location.

“Catherine Eddowes!”

“Don’t... don’t touch me! Don’t hurt me!” the woman screamed out in a loud voice. She appeared to be very frightened and panicked. Then, she quickly put on a strong front despite her feelings of fear. She shouted, “I am one of Dawson’s people! If you dare touch me, you’re dead! Dawson will pluck out your eyeballs!”

“By Dawson, did you mean the pub owner? His arm is already broken,” said Chen Xiaolian. He then grabbed hold of the woman’s shoulder. “So, you can forget about him coming over to rescue you! Now, answer me. Why did you become so afraid after seeing us? You look shocked and scared of us. Why is that?”

“I... ..” The woman’s eyes darted around.

Chen Xiaolian exerted slightly more strength on his grip. The strength of his body had been enhanced up to [B+] class. Thus, even though he had only exerted a little bit more strength, Catherine Eddowes felt a wracking pain coming all the way from the bones of her shoulder. She quickly screamed, “Let me go! Let me go! Don’t! All right! I’ll talk! I’ll talk! Let me go and I’ll talk!”

Chen Xiaolian loosened his grip and pushed the woman to the side of a wall. He said, “Do not lie!”

“During the day... during the day, some police officers came to look for me!” Catherine Eddowes said in a panicked voice. “The police officers showed me your pictures! Both you and this young woman are Chinese, making it easy to recognize you!”

“Police? Pictures?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

“That’s right, the police! One of my friends was killed in the subway station last night! According to the police, the surveillance cameras managed to capture a photo of you people. So, the police came looking for me and asked me to identify you people... that is how it is! I swear everything I said is the truth! It is the truth!”

Chen Xiaolian was partially convinced.

What the woman said appeared quite logical.

She was acquainted with the first victim who died in the subway station last night... considering the fact that they were in the same profession, that was not surprising.

As for himself getting his photo snapped by the surveillance cameras in the subway station, that too, was not surprising. It was highly likely that the police had considered him as a suspect.

When the police were investigating a murder case, looking for the friends of the deceased to find clues and even asking them to identify the suspects were nothing surprising.

It would appear that what she said was plausible.

Hesitating for a bit, Chen Xiaolian then pulled the woman over and said, "Now, come with us."

"No!" the woman screamed out sharply. "No! You want to kill me! No no no! I don't want to die! Don't kill me! Nooo!"

She struggled with all her might, but Chen Xiaolian kept holding onto her as he pulled her toward the place where he had parked the car...

At that moment...

Chen Xiaolian suddenly heard Phoenix shouting out in haste, "Dodge!"

All he could feel was a force slamming into him, causing him to stagger forward by a few steps!

He subconsciously turned his head and saw something shocking.

A bang echoed out!

The sound was like a shockwave, spreading out through the street in the night sky.

At the same instant, the head of Catherine Eddowes, who was standing close by, burst open like a smashed watermelon!

Phoenix had already pounced forward. She caught Chen Xiaolian and the two of them rolled over to the side of the street and to the back of a car.

"Sniper rifle!" Phoenix immediately pulled out her own rifle. "In the ten o'clock direction!"

Chen Xiaolian's heart pounded violently. He felt shocked and furious! Catherine Eddowes died before his very eyes when she was standing right beside him. This important character had died while under his protection!

Thankfully, having gone through three instance dungeons, Chen Xiaolian was more cool-headed than before. He promptly pulled out the side mirror of the car and stuck it out, using the reflection on the mirror

to look in the ten o'clock direction...

"I cannot find anything." Chen Xiaolian checked the mirror.

There was a storied building shrouded in darkness in the direction. However, no reaction could be observed.

Phoenix took a deep breath and said, "Strange... why would someone kill Catherine Eddowes... they actually used a sniper rifle. This is definitely not Jack the Ripper! He would not use something like a sniper rifle! Could it be... other participants?"

"The radar did not reveal any game participant in the vicinity." Chen Xiaolian gave the radar a glance and clenched his teeth. "The Hell! What is going on?"

"Charge forward!" Chen Xiaolian growled with a low voice. Then, he abruptly took off the coat that he was wearing and threw it out fiercely. At the same time, he ran out from another direction. He ran with all his strength and his figure became like a whirlwind that swiftly swept through the street toward the building.

Phoenix quickly ran after him.

...

Upon the rooftop of a building at the ten o'clock direction...

By the time Chen Xiaolian arrived, there was no longer anyone at the rooftop.

"There are some marks on the ground. Someone had been here before." Phoenix pointed at some footprints on the ground. Besides that, there were other traces as well. "Look at this place. Someone was lying here in a prone sniper position."

Due to the traces left on the layer of dust on the ground, Chen Xiaolian too, had noticed that.

"Whoever it is had ran off," said Chen Xiaolian with a frown. "How could they be so fast... also... who could it be?"

Chapter 199: Final Night

“Two~ tigers, two~ tigers, they’re so fast, they’re so fast~”

Tian Lie walked out from the alley while singing the song in a low tone.

In the distance lay the corpse of Catherine Eddowes. Moreover, due to the gunfire from earlier, it appeared that someone had already reported the matter to the police. Some became terrified and ran, while other rushed forward to check out what the commotion was about...

Tian Lie stretched his waist in a languid manner and said, “I hope you will like this surprise I prepared for you... my... friend!”

He laughed out twice and looked at the time. “All right... I should go about completing my own quest!”

...

“Damn it!”

Chen Xiaolian furiously smashed his fist down onto the ground, causing several pieces of the rooftop’s bricks to crack apart. “What is going on here? Why would someone ambush us with a sniper rifle?”

“Enough! The police will be heading here soon! The sound from the gunshot must have alerted no small number of people.” Phoenix took a deep breath and said, “We need to leave this place immediately! Besides, according to what Catherine Eddowes had mentioned earlier, the police are looking for us.”

...

“They’re back?”

Bei Tai jumped down from the rooftop of the warehouse and observed the car coming from a distance.

Phoenix’s two team members, the Titan brothers simply stood outside the doors of the warehouse. The two twins did not say anything in reply to Bei Tai’s words – from the moment Bei Tai got to know them, the two brothers have not spoken a single word.

“Why are you back so soon?” Bei Tai went forward to meet up with them. Seeing Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix alighting from the car, Bei Tai noticed that Chen Xiaolian’s face was not looking too good. Bei Tai became puzzled and asked, “Eh? Guild Leader, where is the victim?”

“Gather everyone together. There is something we need to talk about!” Chen Xiaolian sighed. He raised his head to observe the sky.

Night had arrived. The sky was very agreeable today and he could faintly make out the stars and the moon. A full moon was hanging in the sky above.

A few minutes later, everyone was assembled together in the warehouse.

The only exception was Phoenix’s team member, Monster. He was assigned to the lounge to keep an eye on the storyline characters: the two women, Dr Mu and the forensic doctor, Colombo – they were about to discuss about the issues in the game system. Thus, they cannot allow those ordinary people to listen in beside them.

Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix narrated to the others what happened after they went to the Savage Pub to look for Catherine Eddowes.

“Sniper rifle? Catherine Eddowes was killed by a sniper rifle?”

Lun Tai frowned and muttered, “How could... how could that...”

Chen Xiaolian glanced at him and sighed. He said, “Back then, I had the same reaction as you.”

“Are we being eyed at by another team? Someone is doing the same quest as us... or should I say... on the opposing side?” Lun Tai was quick to consider the first possibility.

That was the first thought to cross everyone’s mind.

Chen Xiaolian turned to Phoenix, signalling to her: You talk.

Phoenix stood with a rifle in her hand and she slowly said, “The first thing to come to my and Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian’s mind was that as well. However... there are several doubtful points about that.

“If the other team is also participating in the same quest, they should have the same goal as us. Why kill the victim? Unless... even though the quest that the other team received was the same, their quest objective is different. Unless... their quest objective is to help Jack the Ripper.”

“That is unlikely,” said Chen Xiaolian. He shook his head and continued, “I personally believe that this speculation does not make sense. Because, if another team is given the quest to help Jack the Ripper... then, this situation does not conform to the balance of the system. Besides, do not forget what we deduced when we began this random quest. No competition will occur in this random quest!”

“Yes, I too, think that it is not possible. The system had made it clear that this time around, both Players and Awakened ones would enter the instance dungeon at the same time. There should be no competition.”

“Additionally... when we were attacked, the system radar showed that there were no other game participants in the vicinity.” Phoenix then continued, “Unless... the other party had utilized a prop to conceal themselves from the radar. Props like these are often a one-time use prop with a considerable price. Who would specifically do such a thing just to mess with us?”

“If they are an enemy with a grudge against us... why not directly attack me or Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian? Back then, the sniper had the opportunity to directly open fire at us. However, it is apparent that the other party’s goal is to kill Catherine Eddowes. After killing her, the sniper retreated without showing any hesitation!”

There should not be any competitive sort of quest objective.

Yet, if the act was not due to other game participants who have a competitive sort of quest objective...

Could it be they were simply here to mess with them due to a grudge?

But why not kill them directly for vengeance? Why kill off an important storyline character?

“Do you have any enemies in this game?” asked Phoenix as she looked

at Chen Xiaolian.

Enemies?

Chen Xiaolian looked at Lun Tai and Bei Tai. All three of them shook their heads.

Tian Lie... he had died in the Tokyo instance dungeon.

Could it be...

Qiao Qiao's father?

That seems improbable!

He had already taken Qiao Qiao away. Besides, Chen Xiaolian had helped him back in Hangzhou by saving Yu Jiajia.

Logically speaking, Father Qiao should not be that kind of bastard who would reciprocate kindness with enmity.

No matter how much they think about it, they can't figure out what the answer was!

"Enemies... what about you?" Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Phoenix.

Phoenix turned to look at Chen Xiaolian. She coolly replied, "As I told you back when we were on the rooftop in the morning... my only enemy is dead."

Among them, Chen Xiaolian may be the only one who understood that sentence of hers.

...

The door to the lounge was opened and Chen Xiaolian entered.

Monster promptly stood up and nodded toward Chen Xiaolian. Then, he walked out of the lounge.

The monkey was not on his back. It climbed down from one of the steel beams outside the warehouse before climbing onto Monster's neck.

"You came back? How was it?" Seeing Chen Xiaolian return, Colombo breathed a sigh of relief. "I don't wish to stay in the same room with that

fellow anymore. There is a disturbing monkey smell on his body... besides... he never talks. I am about to be bored to death.”

“How is Dr Mu?” Chen Xiaolian fixed a complicated look at Dr Mu.

A bitter smile appeared on Colombo’s face. “He is still not awake... I suspect he may have narcolepsy. Or maybe some other illness. I tried checking his pulse, but there is no problem. Since I don’t have any other medical equipment here, I can’t do anything else... it would be best... I mean, if at all possible, it would be for the best to send him to the hospital.”

Colombo was very concerned for his friend. Chen Xiaolian sighed and patted Colombo’s shoulder and said, “Tomorrow. By tomorrow night, all this will be over. When that time comes, everything will become fine.”

Within the room, the two women on the bed have had both their hands and feet tied up. Additionally... due to the concern that they would cause a havoc; their mouths were gagged as well.

“We are looking more and more like kidnappers.” Colombo smiled bitterly and glanced at the two women on the bed. “You need to remember, I am a forensic doctor! A forensic doctor! Presently, I am practically an accomplice to your acts of kidnapping.”

“We are trying to protect them. As long as you are clear on that, you’ll be fine. You are definitely not a kidnapping accomplice,” Chen Xiaolian said with a sigh.

“Right, how did your search for Catherine Eddowes go?” Colombo asked.

Chen Xiaolian was about to talk about what happened... however, he suddenly caught sight of the two women on the bed. Polly was looking at them with especially terrified looking eyes.

Err... forget it.

The two women had already suffered from such a great shock. If they were to be told that one of their colleagues were killed...

They might mentally collapse.

Chen Xiaolian simply shook his head and replied in a vague manner, “Things didn’t go well.”

Colombo had wanted to continue asking. However, Chen Xiaolian patted his shoulder and said, “All right, tell you what. Later on, we will be grouping up everyone. Then... we will do something stupid.”

“Something stupid?” The forensic doctor was shocked.

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head and said, “En... we don’t have any clues right now. All we can do... is wait here. Our search for Catherine Eddowes failed... right now, these two women are all we have. I think... Jack the Ripper would probably come find us. That is also the only hope we have now... other than this, we have no other clues.”

He turned to look at Dr Mu and sighed inwardly: The guide character given by the system is currently unconscious. I wonder, if Dr Mu is not unconscious, could he have given us any clues?

“Clues...” Colombo considered the matter and said, “A pity. My apartment had been destroyed... I have some information regarding this case in my apartment – I have been researching up on this case for years.”

Chen Xiaolian’s interest was suddenly piqued and he sat down beside Colombo. He looked at him and laughed. “I have been wanting to have an opportunity to talk with you. I am very curious, why would you show so much interest in this case?”

“... .. is that a strange thing?” Colombo shrugged his shoulders. “Do not forget what my profession is. I am a forensic doctor.”

He gestured for a bit and continued, “Since my days in the Royal College of Physicians, I had already known what I wanted to do. Can you understand? Ever since I was young, I loved detective novels. I like researching those detective cases the most.

“In UK... I’m sure you know that for the past few centuries, Jack the Ripper’s case is the most infamous one.

“Unfortunately, I am already in the field of medicine. Thus, there was no way for me to become a police officer. However, I chose to become a forensic doctor. That could somehow be considered as police work.”

“Won’t you feel... nauseated?” Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly. He said, “Truth be told, I have also read up on some of the stuff regarding Jack the Ripper. Naturally, the things I read would not be more than the things you’ve read. Even so, I feel uncomfortable. Those bloody photos, the records that were filled with darkness and brutality...”

“Ha ha ha ha!” Colombo laughed. “I am a forensic doctor. Half the time, the work I am involved in require me to perform identification...there are wound cases and murder cases. Do you know how many bloody scenes I have seen before? Do you know that I had to stay in the morgue for 24 hours, looking at the corpses in the morgue and treating them like cattle and sheep... dissecting them and...”

After saying that, Colombo sighed. He continued, “Truth is, most forensic doctors deal with a huge level of stress. Many of them had to go look for a psychiatrist to receive counselling. As time passes, they will feel negative and depressed.”

“Thus, the study of strange cases and detective novels became your hobby?”

“There is a need to do something to relieve the stress that comes from work.” Colombo smiled softly.

“It seems that your line of work is not an easy one,” said Chen Xiaolian. He patted Colombo and said, “Once again, I am sorry for the destruction of your apartment.”

“The money you gave me is enough for the renovation costs... naturally, I also have insurance,” said Colombo. Then, he frowned and said, “I am only afraid that the police would consider this incident as a terrorist attack and have me classified as a suspect due to my disappearance.

“Additionally... the things that you’ve said... even if I were to tell the police about it, I will only be considered a lunatic.”

“Those problems will be solved, I promise.” Chen Xiaolian comforted him.

That evening, Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix made the unanimous decision to utilize the stupidest method.

The so-called stupidest method was to place the two women, Dr Mu, Colombo, Chen Xiaolian’s team and Phoenix’s team...

Together!

Everyone sat together in a circle within the warehouse.

They were all there together!

“First, we cannot let the two women leave our line of sight. Second, we cannot let Dr Mu leave our line of sight! At present, they are the important characters,” Chen Xiaolian explained. “I believe that Jack the Ripper would definitely come looking for these two women. As for Dr Mu, he is the guide character that the system had tasked us with protecting. We must ensure his survival.”

“Then, we should wait around like idiots?” As always, Dagger would interject his opposition.

Chen Xiaolian showed no surprise at his opposing view. He merely glanced at Dagger and asked, “Unless you have a better idea?”

“... ..” Dagger shut his mouth.

“Everyone, get your weapons ready. Be prepared for battle at any moment,” said Chen Xiaolian. Then, he turned to Phoenix.

Phoenix said, “Just now, I have shown the schematics of the warehouse to everyone. Once any mishaps occur, we’ll know where to retreat to... no matter what happens, remember... ensure the safety of the people we need to protect!”

Both Chen Xiaolian and Phoenix were not ordinary people. With their enhanced body, forgoing sleep for two days was not a problem.

When night came, Colombo was unable to hold on and he finally fell asleep. The same was true of the two women. After going through a

frightful day, they could no longer stay awake and fell asleep.

During the night, Chen Xiaolian went over to check up on Dr Mu's situation a few times. However, Dr Mu remained unconscious.

"Do you have any method?" Chen Xiaolian asked Phoenix. "You know magic..."

"You really thought I am a magician?" Phoenix smiled wryly.

The night went by quickly.

When dawn broke, nothing had happened.

That caused Chen Xiaolian and the others to feel frustrated!

Time was moving rapidly. The system had only given them 48 hours to complete this random quest.

In other words... by 10 o'clock in the evening, the time given will be over!

By then, if they still could not... then, they would have failed the quest.

"Keep an open mind," said Phoenix. She looked at Chen Xiaolian and said, "Failing some quests is an inevitability. Besides, this is only part of this instance dungeon. If we fail, we will only suffer from a deduction of marks."

Chen Xiaolian nodded his head.

After dawn arrived, the sun rose up and Chen Xiaolian went to open up the doors to the warehouse, allowing the rays of sunlight to enter.

"I believe Jack the Ripper will not appear in the day," Dagger sneered. "According to history, the fellow would only kill at night. Your way of waiting for the rabbit does not appear to be working."

"I will repeat, if you have a better way, then just say it. Otherwise, please shut your mouth," Chen Xiaolian coldly replied. "We cannot let our guard down even during day time! Anything could happen... additionally, we'll also have to go through another night today! Before 10 o'clock today, there will be a small time period where night falls."

During the day, Chen Xiaolian appeared increasingly restless.

He walked around the warehouse a few times, seemingly trying to figure out something.

Colombo had woken up. He helped conduct an inspection on Dr Mu's body. Then, this forensic doctor felt the heaviness of the atmosphere and chose to sit silently in a corner.

In the afternoon, Chen Xiaolian looked out at the sky.

The weather today was not particularly good. It had been drizzling and the air was moist.

"You need to calm down right now," said Phoenix. She walked to stand beside Chen Xiaolian and she whispered, "You are the Guild Leader... if you are anxious, your team members will be affected by you."

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Phoenix and said, "I am not being anxious. Instead... I feel that I have thought of something. However, I am unable to figure out exactly what that is."

"Oh?"

"My feelings is telling me that I must have missed an important clue," said Chen Xiaolian. He took a deep breath and continued, "But, I just couldn't figure it out."

He abruptly took two steps forward and looked at the sky outside. He said, "I am going out!"

"What?" Phoenix frowned. "There is not much time left until night falls. Where do you plan on going at a time like this?"

"It's very simple! I want to go to the places that we have been to from yesterday night until today... I'll revisit those places to try and figure it out. Maybe I can figure out what is it that I am missing," Chen Xiaolian said in a serious manner. "Trust me, I am certain that I have thought of something. I just couldn't properly form it out at the moment. I have a hunch that I would be able to find something."

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian strode out of the warehouse and into

the rain.

Phoenix tried to chase after him. However, Chen Xiaolian simply turned around and waved his hand. “It will be enough with me alone! You and the others stay here to protect those people.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian made an eye gesture at Lun Tai who was sitting within the warehouse. Lun Tai nodded his head and quietly went to sit beside Dr Mu.

Thus, Chen Xiaolian went out... for a long time.

A few hours later, the sun gradually descended and night fell once more.

The time left until the closing time for their quest, 10 o'clock, was getting closer!

The last glimmer from the setting sun disappeared...

The final night had descended!

As for Chen Xiaolian... he had yet to return!

Chapter 200: It's You!

Bei Tai stood up anxiously and looked out through the doors of the warehouse. Then, he walked back in and whispered, "Big Bro, could something have happened to Guild Leader?"

Lun Tai silently took a puff. The expression on his face was calm; however, traces of concern could be seen. He shook his head, snuffed out his cigarette and said in a heavy voice, "Be patient!"

The sky outside had turned dark. The interior of the warehouse had a row of light bulbs that provided the interior with a faint illumination. However, perhaps due to an issue with the connectors, one of the bulbs was flickering. The flickering bulb gave the rainy night a rather off-putting atmosphere.

Time slowly ticked by and the distance toward 10 o'clock, which signalled the end of the time allocated for this quest, was getting closer.

Phoenix sat by the two women that they caught. She held the rifle in her hand and her fingers gently stroked the barrel of the rifle. An inexplicable glow flickered within her eyes, her emotions indiscernible. Of her team members, Monster was feeding his monkey while the Titan brothers were standing by the warehouse doors. One brother stood on the left, the other brother stood on the right.

Dagger was taking a drag from a cigarette butt. Seven to eight cigarette butts could be seen scattered before him.

"Guild Leader, are we just going to keep waiting like this?"

A rough and low voice asked.

The one who forwarded the question was the one who had remained taciturn all this time, Monster. He tossed the last fruit in his hand to the monkey and stood up. Looking at Phoenix, he slowly said, "Shouldn't we do something?"

Phoenix looked at Monster and considered for a while. "You have doubts?"

“I am not doubting your commands,” said Monster. He scratched his head in a rather simpleton like manner. “It just... this time’s quest is somewhat restrictive. We seem to be simply following others.”

Phoenix looked at Monster. Then, she diverted her gaze and turned to look at Dagger.

There was something unnatural about Dagger’s expression. He subconsciously snuffed out his cigarette butt and lit up another.

“If you have something to say, you can just say it. There is no need to get someone else to say it,” Phoenix sighed. She looked at Dagger and said with a calm voice, “Dagger, it seems there is a need for us to properly talk things through.”

Dagger’s expression turned stiff. He threw away the cigarette and stamped down heavily on it. He stood up and faced Phoenix. “Talk? Very well, let’s talk! In this quest, you have been following the words of that flower boy from another guild! You’ve been supporting everything he said and had us go do everything he suggested! Are you our Guild Leader or is he our Guild Leader?”

Phoenix maintained the smiling expression on her face as she said, “Hmm, and?”

“And?” Dagger clenched his teeth. His eyes shifted to look at Lun Tai and Bei Tai before continuing, “As for the following words, they cannot be said while there are outsiders here! Guild Leader! I believe it would be best for us to only discuss it through when we are among our guild members.”

Phoenix did not turn furious. Instead, she let out a low sigh. She looked at Monster and asked, “Do you think that way as well?”

Monster shook his head and answered, “I respect you, Guild Leader. However, in the course of this quest...”

Phoenix then turned to look at the Titan brothers who were standing in the distance by the warehouse doors. “What about you fellows? What do you think?”

The two brothers exchanged glances. Without saying a word, they slowly walked over and stood behind Monster.

Phoenix nodded her head and said, "I understand. This means that the three of you are neutral. As for Dagger..." Phoenix turned to face Dagger. "You seem to be questioning my position as Guild Leader."

Dagger harrumphed.

"Very well, we can't drag things forever." Phoenix took a deep breath. She turned to look at Monster and the Titan brothers. Then, she slowly said, "How's this? I won't make things difficult for you. After this instance dungeon concludes, I will give Dagger an opportunity to prove his ability. He and I will compete fair and square. If I lose, I will hand over the position of Guild Leader to him, how is that?"

Monster was momentarily stunned. He said, "We... we are not thinking of changing the Guild Leader. I just feel that your commands for this time's quest were problematic and that we should discuss things through and weigh the pros and cons..."

"This is fine. This is my decision." Phoenix waved her hand. She turned to face Dagger and said, "How about it? I'm giving you the opportunity!"

"... very well! Since you have the guts to suggest it, I too, will accept it!" Dagger answered.

"Then it's decided." Phoenix continued coolly, "Monster and the Titan brothers will be the witnesses." After saying that, her voice changed. "But..."

"But what?" Dagger was surprised and he stared at Phoenix. "Are you regretting?"

"I will not go back on my words!" Phoenix coolly said. Her eyes swept over Dagger and her other three team members. "However, my proposal is meant for after this instance dungeon is over! Presently, we are still inside this instance dungeon. Within this instance dungeon, I am still your Guild Leader. For now, at least, you must obey my commands. If there is any problems, wait until after this instance dungeon is over before dealing

with it!”

“... ..” Dagger did not say anything.

Monster nodded and said, “Very well! Changing the commander in the face of battle is forbidden in the military. I agree that we should wait until this instance dungeon is over before solving internal matters. Before this instance dungeon ends, we will obey your commands!”

After saying that, the tall and brawny man turned to look at Dagger and said, “I believe that everyone understands which matters to prioritize.”

...

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai were watching Coffeehouse Guild’s infighting by the side. Bei Tai gently stepped on Lun Tai’s feet and pouted his lips. He then secretly sent a message through the guild channel: Look. What a bunch of fools. They actually started infighting while they are in an instance dungeon.

Lun Tai gave a faint smile and sent a message through the guild channel: We made a mistake back then. The true powerful character is that Monster! That Dagger is just a stupid hatchet man. See? The two twins went to stand beside that Monster.

At that moment, a loud bang suddenly echoed out!

The row of light bulbs hanging above the warehouse was abruptly extinguished.

The warehouse was thus plunged into darkness!

Colombo, who had been sitting in the corner could not help but exclaim in shock.

Within the darkness, Phoenix’s calm voice could clearly be heard. “Do not panic!”

Pausing, Phoenix quickly said, “Monster, go check the power lines. Dagger, Titan brothers! Guard the doors and windows! The rest of you stay in position and do not move!”

A clump of light promptly appeared within the room. Phoenix was

standing in the middle, holding onto a flare stick, which flashed with red light.

“There’s movement outside!” Monster, who had rushed toward the window suddenly said in a low voice.

Phoenix quickly moved over. She stood by the window and looked outside...

A curtain of rain enveloped the yard outside the warehouse. Within that rain however, was a faint translucent figure. The figure slowly moved forward.

Rain drops penetrated through her body effortlessly, seemingly meeting no resistance at all. This illusory scene happened before everyone’s eyes. Surprisingly, it was a female vengeful spirit! It was the one who had attacked the apartment – Black Annie!

Black Annie rapidly moved over through the curtain of rain! This time, her figure no longer seemed solitary. A large spread of silvery light, which appeared similar to a partially transparent mist, spilled over from behind her like quicksilver. It quickly spread over the walls and moved toward the warehouse!

Phoenix did not hesitate. She raised her rifle up and pulled the trigger...

Bang!

Flames sprayed out from the barrel of the rifle as three slug shells exploded forward! Black Annie screamed out sharply and her body instantly blasted off from the ground. She charged rapidly through the curtain of rain before abruptly splitting into countless doppelgangers, all of which sped toward the warehouse!

The intense hail of slugs decimated one of the Black Annie doppelgangers! However, numerous other Black Annie doppelgangers charged in through all other directions!

“What are you just standing there for? FIRE!” Phoenix commanded.

Dagger jumped onto the ledge. Despite this fellow’s contentious mouth,

and his being used as a hatchet man, his strength was quite good!

Holding onto flying blades in both hands, he jumped onto the ledge of the windows and loosened the two flying blades forward! In the yard, two of Black Annie's incoming doppelgangers were struck!

Apparently, the flying blades were also specially made and they flashed with a silvery brilliance. After those Black Annie doppelgangers were struck, they shattered into pieces of light.

Sharp wretched cries from the vengeful spirits pierced through their eardrums and all the glass windows of the warehouse were shattered!

The Titan brothers had already summoned out their own weapons. They were equipped with unique firearms of differing length as they fired out their special bullets.

They defended the windows and doors, tenaciously blocking off the furious charge initiated by the Black Annie doppelgangers!

Dagger turned out to be the most ferocious one. After rapidly shooting out who knew how many flying daggers, he then leapt out of the window. Howling, he then charged into the middle of the vengeful spirit doppelgangers!

Dagger's movements were both fierce and swift and his moves were executed skilfully. With a dagger in both hands, he charged into the middle of all the vengeful spirits and the flashing of his blades turned into a flurry of falling snow. The blades slashed into the vengeful spirit doppelgangers, causing them to burst apart.

Advancing and retreating with ghost like precision, Dagger became an invincible existence within the numerous vengeful spirit doppelgangers!

Lun Tai had already jumped up. Running to the doors of the warehouse, he pulled out the revolver given to him by Phoenix and fired at the vengeful spirits in the distance. Next, he became unable to restrain himself and swore, "Idiot! Why did you rush into the middle of the enemies! You're blocking my line of fire!"

Phoenix too, shouted, "Dagger, come back!"

Dagger, who was in the middle of battling, let out a harrumph. He stabbed his dagger into the vengeful spirit doppelganger beside him and jumped back. Then, he threw a dark look at Lun Tai.

Lun Tai did not say anything, but Bei Tai who was behind him shouted out, “Do you not admit to being stupid? Did you think you were very courageous? We have so many people here shooting, but you went in and blocked our line of fire! Bullets have no eyes. What happens if you get hit?”

The corners of Dagger’s eyes twitched, but he said nothing. He delivered a backhand throw and a flying blade shot out, striking one of the vengeful spirit doppelganger in the head. As a result, the doppelganger burst apart.

“Something is not right! They are too weak!” Phoenix fired continuously. Despite the large number of vengeful spirit doppelgangers, they were all incapable of enduring even a single hit. Although the vengeful spirits’ screams were grating to the ears, they were not much of a threat to Awakened ones.

It was then that Phoenix suddenly frowned. She asked, “Where is Monster?”

Back then, Monster had gone to the second floor of the warehouse to check the line box...

At that moment, a “bang” echoed out!

From another side of the warehouse, Monster’s body was suddenly thrown out from the back of the lounge room. He ended up rolling upon the ground twice. The clothes he wore suffered from numerous tears and several glass fragments could be seen sticking upon his robust body. Yet, he continued protecting his chest area. After standing up, he carefully placed the monkey down on the ground and said, “Hurry up and hide!”

Next, he contracted his body and sprang back in.

The glasses of the power distribution room had been broken and a shrieking vengeful spirit moved out of the room. It was none other than the one they had seen in the subway station!

The vengeful spirit had a dishevelled appearance and she spread out both her hands, revealing ten fingers that were as sharp as blades!

Monster's burly body pounced forward. He waved his hands and his left hand transformed into a big iron hammer while his right hand transformed into a long blade!

Most surprising of all was the thing upon the surface of the iron hammer and blade. Both were affixed with a piece of yellow coloured paper each. The paper was similar in appearance to those talismans used by Daoists to capture ghosts!

The iron hammer and long blade emitted a faint and pulsing glow of light. Next, Monster roared out and charged toward the vengeful spirit before him! He swung the iron hammer and long blade, creating the sound of whooshing wind and adding to the faint glow of light.

The vengeful spirit appeared terrified of the glow of light. A slight exposure to it caused the vengeful spirit to scream out in pain. However, she did not retreat. Instead, she howled, charged forward and engaged Monster in battle!

The vengeful spirit's movement speed was clearly faster than Monster's! Additionally, the seemingly powerful weapon held by Monster would pass through the vengeful spirit's body each time he attacked. Although the glow it emitted caused the vengeful spirit to cry out in pain, the damage dealt appeared limited.

Monster, on the other hand, had to be on guard against the vengeful spirit's sharp fingers. A minor lapse in concentration would cause him to suffer from a slash, causing blood to trickle down! Additionally, a black coloured qi would rapidly swirl around the wounds, causing the wounds to freeze up!

Monster suffered from a few slashes and took several wounds on his body. A layer of frost gradually enveloped his body and his movement gradually became slower!

Observing through the corner of her eyes, Phoenix noted that Monster was in a disadvantageous situation and she quickly said, "Defend the

doors! I will go assist him!”

As she spoke, Phoenix hastily pulled out some talismans from her chest. Then, she threw them forcefully into the air.

The talismans plastered themselves onto the walls surrounding the doors and windows; suddenly, a faint flow of light flashed upon the surface of the walls!

At that moment, the number of vengeful spirit doppelgangers was increasing! The incoming surge of doppelgangers was akin to a tidal wave! The Titan brothers and Lun Tai fired as fast as they could, but were unable to stop the advance of the vengeful spirits.

Some of the vengeful spirits managed to reach the walls and attempted to slip in through the walls. However, the light on the walls threw them back.

“Good stuff!” Lun Tai’s eyes lit up.

However, he quickly noticed that, each time a vengeful spirit was forced back, some of the talismans plastered on the walls would automatically burst into flames! The talismans were burnt into ashes and it disappeared.

By then, Phoenix had reached Monster’s side. She pulled out another piece of talisman and slapped it onto Monster’s body!

A flame like glow of light appeared upon Monster’s body and the layer of frost enveloping his body dissipated.

The vengeful spirit let out a harsh shriek and hastily retreated. Her voice grew increasingly shrill!

It was then that... “BOOM”!

A small portion of the warehouse’s rooftop collapsed and countless metal and steel fragments fell! There were also broken masonry and glass in the mix... all of them were swept up by an invisible force, which then directed them toward the people within the warehouse!

“Protect out people!” Phoenix shouted out and jumped toward the

vengeful spirit! She knew that the vengeful spirit before her was the one controlling the debris! Phoenix held on to two pieces of talismans in her hand and she moved closer toward the vengeful spirit. Her hand shot out and she slapped one of the talismans onto the body of the vengeful spirit.

Chi!

Smoke burst out and the talisman was instantly burnt away! The vengeful spirit screamed miserably and appeared to be in extreme pain. She immediately retreated! Phoenix was quick to pursue her, but she was capable to traversing through the walls, allowing her to shuttle back and forth!

Monster suddenly turned around and charged into the middle area of the warehouse. That was the spot where they had left the two women – tied up.

He threw his body into a roll, pulling Polly with him. After that, countless gravel and broken glass descended upon his back.

The other woman was not so lucky. A sharp glass fragment slit through her throat and blood sprayed out!

“One down!”

Earlier, Bei Tai was keeping both Dr Mu and Colombo protected under him. He had utilized his Air Incarceration skill to create an air shield – unfortunately, his skill was not meant to be used that way. Thus, the area that he could shield was not large.

After another shrill scream rang out, the other side of the warehouse walls began to break down. With a “boom”, a block of wall collapsed and even more gravel and broken glasses flew upward!

“We cannot stay here! It’s going to collapse!”

Bei Tai shouted and he quickly slung Dr Mu onto his shoulder.

Lun Tai shouted back, “Take them together and run! Find an open area!”

He fired a shot and killed off one of the vengeful spirit doppelganger outside before turning around to grab Colombo. He said to Bei Tai, “Dr

Mu is yours!"

At the time, Monster, who was holding onto Polly, was getting up...

A faint clump of light suddenly appeared from the corpse of the killed woman beside...

The third vengeful spirit!

A savage expression appeared on her face. Like the other two, she too had a translucent spirit body. She shrieked out sharply and lashed out with her fingers toward the nearby Monster!

Monster was caught off-guard and had only enough time to step to the side. A long and deep gash appeared upon his chest, painting a line straight through the area where his heart lied. The wound was deep enough to reveal flesh and blood!

Monster grunted and staggered for a bit. Then, he suddenly turned and looked at Bei Tai and Lun Tai. He shouted, "Catch!"

He summoned his strength and tossed Polly over!

As Polly's body was flying through the air, Lun Tai rushed forward to catch her.

Unfortunately, it was too late!

The vengeful spirit who was engaged in battle with Phoenix promptly let out another sharp shriek and one of the reinforcing steel fragments floating in the air shot down. The reinforcing steel fragment pierced right through Polly's head!

The reinforcing steel fragment pierced into her left eye and shot out from the back of her head!

Monster and Lun Tai swore in unison!

After Polly's body fell to the ground, Bei Tai looked at her and hastily pulled Lun Tai back. "Big Bro, be careful! This woman will probably..."

Just as he finished speaking those words, a grim looking vengeful spirit emerged from Polly's corpse. She clearly resembled the deceased Polly!

“Damn it! It’s already the fourth!” Lun Tai roared.

With that, the situation in the warehouse turned dire!

Vengeful spirit Polly pounced toward Dr Mu! Lun Tai quickly rushed forward to hold her back. He opened fire with the revolver twice, causing Polly’s spirit body to explode. However, this female vengeful spirit only retreated a few steps backward. Then, she contracted her body and pounced forward again.

The other vengeful spirit began battling Monster. Once more, Monster’s hands turned into an iron hammer and a long blade once more...

Phoenix was fighting against the vengeful spirit from the subway station. On the other side, the Titan brothers were firing as fast as they can to keep Black Annie’s doppelgangers out...

“Bei Tai! Bring Dr Mu and the other one away! Don’t just stand there! Charge out!”

Bei Tai was quick to act. He grabbed hold of Dr Mu and Colombo in one hand each and placed them beneath his arms. Then, he rushed toward the collapsed part of the walls and ran out!

“You can’t go!” Hearing Lun Tai’s words, Phoenix turned around and shouted out. However, Bei Tai was long gone.

“Idiot! You fell for it!” Phoenix quickly extricated herself from her opponent and rushed over. She raised another talisman up and forced back Polly’s vengeful spirit. Then, she turned to Lun Tai and said, “Can’t you see? They want us to leave this place! They want to divide us!”

“... ..” Lun Tai did not say anything. He simply glanced at Phoenix.

“Hurry up and go after him!” Phoenix charged out. However, two of the vengeful spirits had already come around. They floated amid the hole in the wall before splitting up. One to the left and one to the right, they charged toward Phoenix and Lun Tai respectively!

...

“Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!”

Although he was carrying two people with him, Bei Tai's body had been enhanced to a considerable level, giving him an astonishing level of speed. He immediately made his way out of the warehouse.

The area behind the warehouse was an abandoned wasteland... it was a place overgrown with weeds.

In just one breath's time, Bei Tai had made his way over a hundred metres. He turned around and saw that his brother was not behind him. He felt anxious and struggled to decide if he should return to...

In that instant...

Bei Tai screamed out and his body bounced backward! The two people that he was carrying fell onto the ground.

In one breath, Bei Tai leapt back through a distance of several metres and his body staggered.

A scalpel was stabbed into his chest!

The appearance of the scalpel seemed immaterial, with an illusory glass-like outline. The scalpel, that was sticking onto Bei Tai's chest then quickly turned into a wisp of black smoke.

Bei Tai's body shook and he felt a cold chill spreading out through his wound. As the cold feeling washed over his body, he felt weakened and his teeth trembled uncontrollably. Even his lips began to turn dark blue in colour!

"You... you..." Bei Tai fell to the ground. He ripped open his outer clothes to reveal Meteor Rock Guild's exclusive protective suit. Upon the heart area of the protective suit was a fine crack.

Thankfully, he had this protective suit on his person. Otherwise, the blade would have pierced right into his heart!

"... you! It's YOU!" Bei Tai spat out. His mouth twitched as he regarded the man who was slowly standing up. He looked into the familiar face standing before him!

...

Dr Mu was still lying on the ground. As for the one standing, he had a peculiar smile on his face. He raised his right hand and revealed a sharp scalpel within this palm...

Surprisingly, it was the forensic doctor, Colombo!

Chapter 201: Stomp Him To Death!

“It seems, you people are not as smart as I thought you’d be,” said Colombo. He let out a light sigh and continued, “I have watched no small number of movies. The more the villains talk in the end, the more likely things will get turned around. So, I won’t say much. Now, please die!”

Holding onto a scalpel in his hand, his body abruptly staggered!

Colombo’s body fell to the ground while a translucent spirit body emerged. Still holding onto a scalpel, the spirit body charged at Bei Tai, who was lying on the ground!

Seeing the incoming scalpel, Bei Tai howled. He quickly summoned out a long blade out and threw it forward!

Unfortunately, the long blade simply went past Colombo’s spirit body!

“Just die already! You do not have the ability to harm my spirit body!”

The scalpel was on the verge to descending upon Bei Tai’s neck when...
Ding!

Something descended from the sky like a meteor; then, with a flash of silvery light, the scalpel was deflected!

Colombo’s spirit body uttered out a sharp cry and he rapidly pulled his body backward!

A figure, not too tall, appeared out of thin air and stood before Bei Tai.

The figure wore white coloured clothes, a calm expression and a set of cold eyes on his face.

In his hand was a translucent short sword.

The God of Slaughter from the Warring States era! Bai Qi!

...

“It seems I guessed it right once again.”

Chen Xiaolian’s voice spoke out from the left side.

A dismantled low wall stood at the location.

“Guild Leader, if you were slower by a few more seconds, I would have died.” Bei Tai sighed.

Chen Xiaolian flicked his hand and Fearless War Axe appeared in his hand. Then, he slowly walked out from behind the low wall.

Colombo's eyes were widened as he stared at Chen Xiaolian. He uttered, “You?”

“Is this that surprising? What did you say just now? We are not as smart as you thought? Err... how about I throw those words right back at you?”

Chen Xiaolian raised his Fearless War Axe and said, “Oh, while I'm at it, I should probably tell you this... back in the afternoon, on the way back, I went to the church. I got some holy water and dipped my weapon in it. I wonder what kind of effect it will have against you?”

There was a stiff expression on Colombo's face.

Chen Xiaolian moved forward, one step at a time. He then stood beside Bei Tai and asked, “Are you very surprised?”

By then, Colombo appeared to have calmed down.

He gently stroked the scalpel held between his fingers and asked, “When did you find out?”

Chen Xiaolian smiled and replied, “Are you trying to buy time? Oh, no problem. In the movies, if the villains spout too much nonsense, he will find that his situation will be overturned. Luckily for me, I am not the villain here.”

Despite having said that, Chen Xiaolian kept staring carefully at Colombo. He carefully took a step forward...

Colombo's reaction was incredibly fast! His body shot backward at an extreme level of speed.

His spirit body flashed backward through over ten metres like a beam of light. Then, he moved to stand beside Dr Mu!

His scalpel was pointed at Dr Mu!

Chen Xiaolian raised his eyebrows and pulled back his foot.

“Now you have enough time to spout nonsense. If you do not want him to die immediately, don’t make any rash movements,” said Colombo. There was a peculiar expression on his face. “How did you know?”

Chen Xiaolian glanced at Bei Tai and saw that he was slowly getting up.

Colombo’s eyes flickered. “Did you already know early on? When you left in the afternoon, the reason you left your two companions behind was, in fact, to...”

“No, I am not that smart,” answered Chen Xiaolian, shrugging his shoulders. “When I went out in the afternoon, I did not suspect you.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath and raised his head to observe the sky above.

The rain was drizzling down and the sky appeared hazy.

“Ever since this incident began, I have been having this feeling of suspicion,” Chen Xiaolian said coolly. As he spoke, he stepped to the left – he was careful not to move close to Colombo. Instead, he walked around while maintaining a certain distance between them. While maintaining his silence, he walked until he was on the other side. Then, he spoke up, “In the beginning, I had indeed suspected Dr Mu. Although Dagger was an asshole, he did bring up an important question. Why would the vengeful spirit attack Dr Mu?”

Colombo did not say anything.

“As such, when I thought about it, there was this possibility: Dr Mu is the murderer and the vengeful spirit wants revenge.

“Dr Mu is indeed a suspicious character. In the first murder scene in the subway station, he was there beside the corpse.

“Moreover, our analysis revealed that the murderer must be someone who is familiar with the field of medicine...

“All of that makes Dr Mu a suspect.

“However, after thinking about it carefully, there are some loopholes in that deduction.

“Don’t forget, our side suffered from the vengeful spirit’s attack a second time when we were in your apartment.

“Back then, the vengeful spirit’s target of attack was not just Dr Mu... there was also Polly! The poor woman was nearly strangled to death in the toilet.

“This brings up an issue. Say Dr Mu is the murderer and the vengeful spirit wants to attack Dr Mu for revenge. That in itself is something that makes sense.

“However, for her to be attacking the other victims? That is ridiculous.

“If so, let’s consider it from a different perspective... perhaps, when the vengeful spirit attacked us, it was not doing so out of its own free will!

“Perhaps... those women who were killed, their vengeful spirits were being manipulated.

“And the one manipulating those vengeful spirits... naturally, it is the one who killed them!

“Thus, by thinking along these lines, the issue was no longer that hard to understand.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian sighed. He continued, “Additionally, I also made a mistake back then.”

“Oh?”

“It was during that night in the park when we went looking for Polly... perhaps it was due to our appearance and us hiding in the dark that caused Jack the Ripper to not make his appearance.

“But the question is... how did the murderer know that we were in the park?

“The other members were laid in ambush outside the park while the four of us hid in ambush inside.

“If Jack the Ripper really have the ability to make himself invisible and was able to find out about our ambush... then, we can forget about solving this case... the advantages given to Jack the Ripper is simply too imbalanced!

“I remember hearing these words before: The system will not issue out a quest that cannot be completed.

“If so... there is this other possibility. Jack the Ripper knew about us laying an ambush in the park because... he was hiding among us!

“Of course... in the beginning, this deduction deepened my suspicion toward Dr Mu.

“After all, all the signs pointed toward Dr Mu.

“However, this afternoon, I went to this place and suddenly discovered the clues that I have been missing... then, I thought of you, dear Mr Colombo!

“That night in the park, when we were laying the ambush, besides Dr Mu, you were also there!”

“Oh? Where did you go in the afternoon to discover those missing clues? Why did you end up suspecting me?” Colombo placed his scalpel upon Dr Mu’s neck and gently used it to stroke Dr Mu’s neck. He grinned, a cold expression on his face.

“Your apartment,” Chen Xiaolian said without withholding anything. “Truth be told, after going out today, I went to several places. I went to all the places that were involved with this case, from the beginning to the end. I went to check on all of them!

“And, in your apartment, I accidentally discovered something.”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian raised several fingers up.

“First, Dr Mu’s unconscious state began from your apartment. If Jack the Ripper or the vengeful spirit possess a long ranged ability that could harm him... then the system quest of protecting the guide character would be a joke! That would not make any sense!

“Thus, I believe that Dr Mu had encountered something during his time in the apartment, causing him to fall into this state of unconsciousness!

“In the beginning, I thought that it was done by the vengeful spirit... perhaps, during the attack on the apartment, the vengeful spirit managed to somehow harm Dr Mu – back then, that was what I thought.

“However, after returning to the apartment in the afternoon... naturally, that place had been cordoned off by the police. I slipped in and rechecked the scene. I recalled what my guild members told me about everything that happened during the attack.

“Now, let us revisit what happened when the apartment was being attacked.

“Polly was attacked while she was in the toilet.

“Dr Mu, who was in the bedroom was also nearly killed by the vengeful spirit.

“In the living room, my two team members were attacked by all kinds of blades.

“After carefully thinking it through, I suddenly discovered a huge issue. That is...

“The only one not under attack... is you!

“Mr Colombo!

“I still remember what my team member, Lun Tai, had said. Back then, the floating blades had attacked Bei Tai and Lun Tai. However, they did not directly attack you!

“However, due to the confusion during that time, we overlooked that point.

“Additionally, my team member, Lun Tai did his best to protect you. Once something happened, he had quickly placed you on the sofa and covered you.

“However, thinking about it in detail... those blades were not flying toward you! Not a single one of them did!

“In the afternoon, I investigated the scene in the living room, inclusive of the blade marks left on the wall! And also the places that you were at in the living room...

“Everywhere I turn, there was only one conclusion: You are the only one who was not targeted!

“Additionally, I also remember this. Before Dr Mu became unconscious, the last person he came in contact with was... you! Mr Colombo!

“You claimed that he was exhausted and was emotionally unstable. Thus, you gave him sleeping pills.

“Did you know what I did?

“I went through the things in your apartment and found your medicine kit.

“Unfortunately... I am unable to find the sleeping pills in your kit!

“Could it be... the sleeping pill you gave Dr Mu happened to be the last one in your kit?

“I think that would be way too much of a coincidence!

“Oh, right... I should also say this. While I was looking through your apartment, I accidentally found this.”

Chen Xiaolian pulled out a set of clothes from his Storage Watch and threw it down onto the ground.

It was... a grey coloured suit and an old hat!

“I began to suspect you,” Chen Xiaolian said coldly. “Let’s go back to when the murders happened...”

“When the first murder happened, you were in your apartment... however, there was no one to testify that! When we arrived at your apartment, you appeared as though you had just woken up – the act you put up was very convincing.

“In the second murder, Black Annie was dragged into the shrubbery and killed... during that time, you were also in your apartment.

“However, after reassessing the details, I discovered an interesting coincidence. The murder occurred somewhere around the time when Phoenix and I had left to find Black Annie.

“At that time, you were in the apartment... but... you were resting in the bedroom.

“I asked Lun Tai and Bei Tai. Back then, the both of them were in the living room while you and Dr Mu were resting in the bedroom!

“In both murder cases, we did not have our eyes on you.

“Maybe that is just a coincidence?” Colombo shook his head.

“Something like that cannot prove anything. How could you be certain that I could separate my spirit body out to secretly leave the apartment and go kill the victim?”

“Because I am rather convinced... that the killer had been hiding by our side!” Chen Xiaolian said each word with slow emphasis.

“... ..”

“It’s not that hard to reach this conclusion. Think about all the things we’ve encountered so far.

“The attack we suffered in the apartment!

“Phoenix and I left, so did Phoenix’s team members.

“Thus, leaving only Lun Tai and Bei Tai to make up for the apartment’s battle strength.

“Looking through the past two days, that time period in the apartment represented the moment when our defensive force was at its weakest!

“And yet, the attack just so happened to have occurred during that time period!

“So... the only explanation for that would be... that the killer possessed a thorough grasp of our situation!

“Perhaps, he has always been by our side!”

Chen Xiaolian sighed and continued, “I only thought of all those things

after going to your apartment this afternoon.”

Colombo narrowed his eyes and looked at Chen Xiaolian. Then, he turned to look at Bei Tai. “So... after thinking about it, you deliberately chose not to return... instead, you hid over here?”

Chen Xiaolian smiled and said, “I secretly contacted my team members using guild channel and they agreed to it.

“I hid outside and waited.

“I believed that you will definitely make a move tonight – because the time is about to end. You must act before the time runs out.

“I informed my team members to run in this direction when the time comes. I will be waiting here to help out.

“Truth be told, even when I made an agreement with them, I could not be absolutely certain that you are the killer. I still held some suspicion toward Dr Mu.

“At least, the number of possibilities had been narrowed, don’t you think?”

Colombo laughed out loud.

There was something sinister in the way he laughed.

“You are quite the smart alec.” Colombo raised the hand holding onto the scalpel. “But... are you planning on hauling in the nets now, like a fisherman?”

His eyes flickered with an expression of disdain and he said, “Do not forget, Dr Mu is currently in my hands. That system or whatever it is that you are talking about wants you to protect him, right? If I recall, if he dies, you will all fail, right? But now, he is in my hands! So, you had better...”

“Go ahead, kill him. Just do it, now. I’ll watch.”

Chen Xiaolian suddenly uttered those cold words at him!

“... ..” Colombo was flabbergasted.

Chen Xiaolian raised his eyebrows and he stepped forward while looking at Colombo. He asked, "Why aren't you doing anything? Mr Colombo? Oh, esteemed forensic doctor, or should I address you as Jack the Ripper? You have your scalpel pointed at Dr Mu, why aren't you killing him? KILL HIM!"

"... .." Colombo gripped onto the scalpel, but was unable to stab it in!

"If you want to kill, then just kill!" Chen Xiaolian's gaze was akin to a sharp blade. He continued, "Back in the subway station, he was the first witness to the scene of the crime. However, you did not kill him. Instead, you ran away! Back in the apartment, you were also with him in the apartment. You had plenty of chances to kill him, yet you did not. You only used some methods to knock him unconscious.

"I believe that there is some form of restriction.

"Thus, you cannot personally kill him!

"You can only make use of the vengeful spirit to kill him!"

Colombo stared intently at Chen Xiaolian without saying a single word.

"I only have two questions that I have yet to figure out... why did you knock Dr Mu unconscious?" asked Chen Xiaolian as he regarded Colombo. He said, "Since it's come to this, you might as well explain things for me, won't you?"

"... .. he suspected me," Colombo sighed. "It's very simple. The answer is lying at your feet."

Chen Xiaolian lowered his head to look at his feet... what he saw was the grey coloured suit and the old hat.

"When he was resting in the bedroom, he saw the clothes that I hid inside the closet. Thus, I had no choice but to make a move against him... unfortunately, I had no way to harm him. It was as though there was some form of restriction placed onto my being, leading to me being unable to directly kill him... thus, I could only use condensed sevoflurane, a very powerful anaesthetic agent on him.

“Thank you for answering the question for me.” Chen Xiaolian smiled and said, “My last question... just who exactly are you? Are you Jack the Ripper? What I mean by that is... are you Jack the Ripper from history? Could it be that you are a monster who could live for over a hundred years? Or are you... a ghost?”

“I am ME!”

Colombo suddenly roared out!

Both the pupils of his eyes suddenly shone with black coloured flames! His voice became infused with a trace of arrogance.

“... .. why do you think it is that Jack the Ripper from history had never been caught?

“That is because; I am not an ordinary human!

“I am a doctor, one with an exalted status!

“To be exact, I am a witchdoctor!

“Killing people is simply a way to further my research into black magic... every time I kill a person, their blood and internal organs become sacrifices, allowing me to acquire even greater power!

“A hundred years ago, I had succeeded once!

“This time... for some unknown reason, some unknown power had allowed me to be reborn into this world. Thus, I will do it once again!

“... .. wait, holdup. You mean to say... you are Jack the Ripper from history? Then... the you from history, what happened to you in the end. Didn't you manage to evade being caught by the police?”

“I died!” Colombo sneered. “The public would obviously think that I have never been apprehended. Even the police would have no records of it.

“However, the truth was... back then, the me from history had killed five people and my black magic grew to a great level... did you think something like this could be solved through the police's meagre abilities?

“In the end... a group of bastards similar to you people appeared! Those strange fellows hunted me down and finally... I was killed!”

Chen Xiaolian's body quivered.

Could it be... the Jack the Ripper from history... in the end, a group of Awakened ones... or perhaps Players... killed him?

Could it be... the historical Jack the Ripper's case... is also... an instance dungeon?

So, right now, the system picked out this storyline and replayed it?

Colombo sneered. “Do you think you are strong enough to deal with me? I have killed four people! I now have enough power to decimate you all! Compared to those strange fellows I encountered a hundred years ago... you people are far too weak! Even though I did not manage to kill five people... killing four is enough to restore my strength by half! At the very least, it is enough for me to kill you all!”

“Black magic... killing... sacrifice...” Chen Xiaolian sighed and said, “Every time you kill a person, your strength will be increased... is my understanding of this correct?”

He suddenly shook his head and continued, “Who said I am going to be personally fighting against you? Thankfully, even though my strength is not that good, I have a very powerful helper.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian raised his hand and said in a haughty manner, “Bai Qi! Stomp him to death!”

Chapter 202: Permanent Death?

Colombo tossed Dr Mu's body aside and his spirit body quickly flew backward!

Shua!

A blood coloured blade flashed out before Colombo! Bai Qi appeared before him, his sword in hand!

The sword in his hand was translucent and a faint red coloured light flowed within it. It had the appearance of flowing blood...

A shocked expression spread out on Colombo's face and he stared at Bai Qi. "Spirit body?"

Chen Xiaolian stood to the side. He did not step forward; he and Bei Tai simply stood vigilantly at two different corner positions, surrounding Colombo.

As for Colombo... dealing with him was left to Bai Qi.

Chen Xiaolian had absolute confidence in Bai Qi!

When facing an enemy such as Colombo, the one problem they face was that he had a spirit body. Thus, they may not be able to effectively mount an attack against him – however, this was not an issue for Bai Qi!

Bai Qi had appeared from the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang. Back then, he was capable of summoning and commanding those Qin terracotta soldiers who were a form of undead life form. At the same time, Bai Qi was also a 'War Soul'. At present, Bai Qi could be said to be Chen Xiaolian's most powerful form of offensive power!

Colombo dodged the first sword attack from Bai Qi. However, his face became increasingly distorted. The originally translucent spirit body of his gradually became paler and more faint!

Bai Qi's eyes turned fearsome and he slowly raised his sword, pointing the tip at Colombo.

"Barbarian! DIE!"

Bar... barbarian...

Chen Xiaolian rolled his eyes.

Bai Qi actually labelled Colombo as a barbarian?

The origin of the State of Qin is plenty barbaric oh...

Err... but if one were to consider the traditional line of thought, those within China were Chinese while those not from China were barbarians. Under such a perspective, Bai Qi's claim could be considered eligible from China's perspective.

...

At least half of the warehouse had collapsed down!

Phoenix was in a dishevelled state. Both her hands were holding onto a piece of talisman each. As for Lun Tai, he stood behind Phoenix in a back-to-back position. In his hand was a military knife that had been affixed with a talisman from Phoenix.

The two of them panted for breath as they stood back-to-back in the middle of two vengeful spirits.

Monster was gasping as he lay on the floor. Judging by his appearance, the amount of damage he took was quite considerable and the wounds upon his body had turned black in colour. There was also a thin layer of frost enveloping his body.

Black Annie's vengeful spirits had made it through into the warehouse and the Titan brothers had moved into a back-to-back position as well. The firearms in their hands had long since been forsaken. However, it would appear that the twins' abilities were not suitable against spirit bodies. They were only barely able to hold on; both of them held onto a wooden stick – appearance wise, those sticks resembled magic wands. Strangely however, they were simply using the stick as a torch. They raised the torch up high and brandished it, using the flames of the torch to keep the vengeful spirits at bay.

Dagger though, was performing fairly well. Both his hands were holding

onto a blade each and he was squaring off against one of the vengeful spirits. The more he fought, the more valiant he became and was even suppressing the vengeful spirit – however, he appeared inconsiderate of his companions. He continued shouting out as he fought the vengeful spirit. Despite knowing that Phoenix, Monster and the others were not in a good situation, he showed no intention of moving forward to help out. He simply continued fighting against the vengeful spirit in the corner of the warehouse.

In that instant...

A chilling howl echoed out from somewhere far away.

The sharp howl was like the furious roar of a night owl, comparable to tigers and wolves! It was a sharp and piercing sound of that degree!

The moment the four vengeful spirits within the warehouse heard the howl, they reacted in the same manner. Their faces became distorted. Then, they unleashed a shrill howl. In that moment, the entire warehouse became inundated by the shrill and mournful voice, nearly causing their ears to bleed out.

Hu!

The four vengeful spirits made the same move. Without showing any hesitation, they broke away from their current opponent and charged forward in the same direction.

The warehouse instantly fell silent and the remaining people took the opportunity to catch their breaths. The expression on Phoenix's face turned ugly to behold and she said, "They... they are headed outside! Where did your companion go to?"

Lun Tai struggled to support his own body. He produced a Healing Beast Blood and gulped it down before exhaling. "What is there to ask? Chase them and we'll find out!"

Phoenix's eyes flickered and she said, "You... you all had prepared for this! Where is Chen Xiaolian?"

"Our Guild Leader should be outside right now!" Lun Tai grinned.

...

The four vengeful spirits pierced through the night sky, creating a white coloured translucent arc, which descended down from the sky!

Colombo appeared to be in a miserable state as he kept retreating. He dodged to the left and ducked to the right. Bai Qi had one hand placed behind his back while the other hand held onto the sword, brandishing it forward in a seemingly gentle manner. Yet, despite the elegance and gentleness shown by his movements, it also exuded an indescribable force of savagery!

As for Colombo, he had suffered from a few of those stabs. He was a spirit body and Bai Qi's sword attack did not cause him any harm. However, each time he was struck, he would scream out and his translucent body would grow increasingly dim.

After being struck several times in a row, the light from Colombo's spirit body had grown ten times weaker. He resembled a spark of fire within a gale that could be put out at any given moment!

It was at that moment that the four vengeful spirits descended from the sky!

Colombo laughed out maniacally and said, "Now, it's time for you to die!"

He suddenly opened his mouth!

His mouth, which was of a normal size suddenly enlarged to become as big as a basin. Like a whale that was sucking in water, the four vengeful spirits by his side roared and were all sucked into his mouth!

Colombo's body suddenly expanded and his originally translucent body revealed a faint flow of light. There were hints of solidity coming off his body!

Next, a clump of black qi vigorously flowed out to envelop Colombo's body.

The scalpel in Colombo's hand transformed. It expanded and quickly

stretched out to become a long half-moon shaped... sickle!

The black qi swirling around Colombo seemingly transformed into a long black cloak.

If one were to observe him from a distance... the swirling black cloak, the long sickle...

He resembled the Western being spoken in the legends...

The Grim Reaper!

...

Bai Qi did not launch an attack. Instead, he took a step back. Positioning his sword behind him, he cast a calm gaze at Colombo who was standing before him.

He continued doing so until Colombo finished his transformation. Colombo's aura violently exploded out from his body and the swirling black coloured qi spread out. After being enveloped by the black coloured qi, the weeds on the ground instantly withered and turned to ash...

Within the wasteland, the black coloured qi released by Colombo was astonishing, resulting in Bai Qi becoming small and insignificant in appearance!

Colombo's stature had expanded up to a height of two metres. He looked down on Bai Qi in a condescending manner and spoke with a dark and savage voice, "Now... time to die!"

Bai Qi quietly raised his head, his expression as tranquil as the moon. Then, he slowly said, "Is that how you do battle?"

"... what?"

"Do not just kill; complete the tasks in one move." Bai Qi gently sighed and he gently wiped his sword with his sleeve [1].

"Ha ha ha ha! I do not know what you're talking about! However, you may go die!" Colombo laughed out and his sickle descended toward Bai Qi's head. "I can feel it, you are also an undead! The best sacrificial item! By killing you, I would become even more powerful!"

The sickle descended, bringing the black coloured qi down with it. However, Bai Qi simply raised the translucent short sword in his hand.

As the black qi descended like Mt. Tai, a faint, white coloured radiance flowed out from Bai Qi's body and was emitted out from the edge of his sword. The light split apart the black coloured qi that was enveloping the sky!

Bai Qi made his move! He appeared displeased as he strode out from within the field enveloped by the black qi. Wherever the light of his sword reached, the black coloured qi would end up being split into two!

Keng!

A clear and sharp sound rang out!

Colombo gave a wretched howl. The large half-moon sickle that he was holding had split into two!

The edge of Bai Qi's sword split the darkness apart and shot forward. After cleaving the sickle, the edge of the sword descended upon Colombo's shoulder!

Colombo screamed out in misery and his figure bolted back quickly. As he did, black coloured light spilled out from him.

An arm wrapped in black qi that was holding onto a broken sickle fell onto the ground. The light from Bai Qi's sword shone upon it and the arm, sickle and the black qi dissolved into ashes before disappearing.

Colombo screamed out, his voice growing increasingly wretched. After losing his arm, the black qi upon his body surged forward and they quickly reformed a new arm. However, it was apparent that damage had been inflicted upon him. His massive body had shrunk down by a slight degree.

"How is... how is that possible?" Colombo roared out in fury. "You should be the same as me! How could you oppose the aura of death? How could you have... holy powers?!"

Bai Qi soared forward!

Body and sword as one, Bai Qi flashed through the air like a meteor. He seemingly became a white beam of light, which struck Colombo's body and pierced straight through him!

In but a blink of an eye, Bai Qi had descended upon the ground. Behind him, Colombo simply stood there, unmoving.

Bai Qi gently placed down his sword. Then, he slowly turned around.

Upon his pale white face, faint black coloured flames seemed to be flickering within his pair of eyes.

"I... I am unwilling!"

Upon Colombo's chest was a gash. The black qi there had already been dispersed and a white coloured light flowed within the wound.

Colombo's body trembled uncontrollably and his face was a mask of savagery. Suddenly, he fell to his knees.

"I... unwilling! Unwilling! Just one... I am just missing one! If I had killed one more, I would have obtained the completed Grim Reaper body! You... you all..." Colombo viciously glared at Chen Xiaolian. "You should not have been a match for me! None of you should have been a match for me! If only I could have killed the fifth... if only I could gather five vengeful spirit..."

Observing Colombo, Chen Xiaolian frowned and he thought of something.

"I... am unwilling! I... I will return again! I am an undead, I have an undying body! Even if you kill me, I will be reborn anew! In the end, I will obtain the completed Grim Reaper body!"

Pu!

A blade pierced out from Colombo's mouth, cutting off his last words.

Bai Qi stood behind Colombo, his sword piercing into Colombo from the back of his head and out through the mouth.

Next, Bai Qi slowly retracted his sword.

His sword seemingly exerted a suction force and the black coloured qi swirled out violently from the back of Colombo's head!

"Ah ah ah ah ah!" Colombo's eyes finally revealed an expression of fear.

He raised his hands in an attempt to clutch his head. He tried to cover the black qi that was madly flaring up from the back of his head.

"You... you... you..."

Countless black qi soared up into the sky. It was as though black coloured, ink-like clouds were being formed above the piece of wasteland. The dark clouds then descended and it rapidly pervaded the edge of Bai Qi's sword!

As they descended, it appeared as though Bai Qi was standing within the eye of a tornado.

He held on to the short sword and more of the black qi was pulled by him into the sword. The translucent sword slowly became black in colour. It was as black as ink, so much so that ink might actually drip out from it!

Bai Qi's pale face grew even paler. As he stood there, it seemed as though his body was becoming increasingly transparent, like a piece of glass...

...

Phoenix and the others who were running over arrived just in time to witness this astonishing scene.

The black clouds covering the sky collapsed and quickly dissipated. More than 90 % of them were absorbed into Bai Qi's sword while the remainder drifted about amid the night.

Bai Qi kept his sword and turned around. He coldly regarded Phoenix and the others.

That one glance from him caused Phoenix to feel a wave of coldness washing through her body. Her legs that were originally running quickly became rooted on the spot.

She felt as though that glance from Bai Qi had pierced into her body!

The coldness spread through her entire body, causing a loss in the ability to move.

Bai Qi retracted his gaze and stepped toward Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian noticed that each step taken by Bai Qi appeared heavy. It even appeared as though he was... slightly stumbling.

Appearance wise, it seemed that he was not in good shape.

“Are you all right?” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

Suddenly, Bai Qi’s body staggered for an instant.

He raised his left hand. Shockingly, the palm of his hand had turned black in colour, like carbon!

The black colour slowly spread up his arms.

“What is going on here?” asked Chen Xiaolian, his eyebrows furrowed.

“It... very strong,” answered Bai Qi. He frowned and turned to look at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian discovered that some changes had occurred to Bai Qi’s expression when compared to the past him – it appeared that a hint of life had appeared upon the originally stiff expression of his.

“You are lucky,” Bai Qi suddenly said. “It is very strong. If it was one third stronger, I would not have been a match for it.”

Chen Xiaolian’s body shook.

The reason was not just due to what Bai Qi had said... “If it was stronger by one third, then I would not have been a match for it.”

Another reason for his surprise was the tone of voice used by Bai Qi!

Although Bai Qi could also speak before this, he was only able to utter a few words at a time, like a child who was beginning to learn how to speak. His attempts to speak had always appeared mechanical and difficult.

At that moment however, Bai Qi’s tone of voice was clearly much smoother!

“You... grew up?” Chen Xiaolian regarded Bai Qi.

“Death qi abundant, lifeblood insufficient,” said Bai Qi. He glanced at Chen Xiaolian and continued, “Next time, if you cannot find lifeblood for me to absorb, I would not be able to help you.”

After saying that, Bai Qi transformed into a beam of light and he disappeared!

Among the several times that Chen Xiaolian had summoned out Bai Qi, this was the first time that Bai Qi had disappeared by himself without Chen Xiaolian’s command!

Could it be... Bai Qi had suffered from a serious injury?

Chen Xiaolian checked his pet interface and saw that Bai Qi had returned into the system.

After seeing that, Chen Xiaolian felt himself easing up somewhat.

“Hey! Chen Xiaolian! What is going on here?”

Phoenix finally moved over. She stared intently at Chen Xiaolian while biting down on her lips. She asked, “Just now, the one in white...”

Chen Xiaolian turned his head and looked at Phoenix.

From behind Phoenix, Lun Tai was already running over together with Phoenix’s other team members.

“All right... I think this quest is complete,” Chen Xiaolian said coolly. “If you want to know, I will slowly tell you about it.”

[System prompt: Meteor Rock Guild has completed the random quest. The system’s guide character is alive. Acquired 100 marks. Defeated Jack the Ripper and prevented Jack the Ripper from getting five black magic sacrifices. Acquired 100 marks.

[System prompt: The quest’s objective character Jack the Ripper had permanently died! A redundant value has appeared in the system!

[System prompt: The random quest’s objective character Jack the Ripper had permanently died! Chen Xiaolian has acquired additional

bonus reward: 1,000 points. All participating members of Meteor Rock Guild has acquired 300 points each as bonus reward!]

Permanent death? Redundant value?

Chen Xiaolian was dumbfounded.

What is the meaning of this...

Judging by the contents of the system prompt... it would appear that Jack the Ripper's permanent death was an irregular situation...

—

1 'Complete the tasks in one move' = '为毕其功于一役' means to complete things that needed to be done in stages in one fell swoop. Maybe killing Colombo and then killing the vengeful spirits one by one was too cumbersome, so he waited for them to merge...

Chapter 203: Who Is Helping?

Permanent death...

Those words appeared contradictory. Death, could it be death was not a permanent thing?

Although, considering the characteristic of the system... death was indeed not a permanent thing for it. The system could resurrect a person, refresh, reset and manufacture...

If so, by looking deep into the meaning of the words 'permanent death', it appeared that... this could somewhat prove the deduction made by Chen Xiaolian.

Jack the Ripper... he could be re-spawned repeatedly?

If this was part of a storyline, then...

Then Jack the Ripper's serial murder case may have been repeated by the system many times before!

Also, this instance dungeon had been re-used many times before!

Before today, it was likely that other game participants have gone through this instance dungeon and completed this quest.

Each time they completed the quest, Jack the Ripper would likely be summoned back into the system. Then, he would be refreshed to await the next time the instance dungeon was opened.

And now, Jack the Ripper had died.

He had suffered a complete, permanent death in the hands of Bai Qi...

He... was absorbed by Bai Qi.

This matter... was that how it went?

...

"You know, the fish finger sold by this shop is the worst in all of London."

Tian Lie was seated on a sofa with worn surface and a thick mildew

scent. Both his hands were placed upon the surface of the dirty table; one was supporting his head while the other picked up a fish finger and stuffed it into his mouth. At the same time, he turned his head to look out the window.

It was a very dirty looking little shop. The menu listed the food sold there, the infamous local specialty of Great Britain: Fish and chips.

Seated opposite of Tian Lie was the Frenchman with bulbous nose.

A metallic lustre could be seen flashing within Jean's eyes. His head was lowered and no one in the dark shop paid any attention to the spot that they were occupying. As he sat down on the sofa, the body posture made by Jean's body was clearly stiff in appearance.

"Since it's so bad, why did you bring me here?" Jean did his best to make it so that his voice sounded normal. Something was flowing within the blood vessels beneath his skin.

Jean understood very well that if this fellow before him had wanted him dead, he would not need to move even a finger. All he needed to do was think about it.

He had no desire to die now!

Although he had joined Culkin's guild, Jean had yet to become loyal to the point where he would sacrifice his own life for Culkin.

Tian Lie placed down the fish finger and turned to Jean. "Hmm?"

"I said, since it tastes so bad, why did you bring me here?" answered Jean as he twitched his nose.

"Because... I have a special memory toward this place," answered Tian Lie. He curled the corners of his lips into a grin and stuffed the last piece of fish fingers into his mouth.

He turned to look out the window once more and said, "You know, back when I was still a rookie, all I could do in the beginning was to follow behind others to survive. I had to do everything I can just to ensure my survival."

“However, the time finally came when I managed to complete an instance dungeon quest by myself.

“En, that was the first time it happened.”

After saying that, Tian Lie turned to Jean and blinked his eyes. “You see, we humans will never forget our first time, isn’t that right?”

“... ..” Jean looked at Tian Lie and asked, “The first instance dungeon quest that you completed by yourself... could it be, you did it in London?”

“Oh, yes.”

Jean thought about it and further questioned, “What quest was it?”

“The Ripper... Jack,” Tian Lie answered with a smile on his face.

...

“That’s about the gist of what happened.”

They had returned to the collapsed warehouse. Although a major portion of the roof had collapsed, a small part remained. It was sufficient to serve as a shelter from the rain.

There, Chen Xiaolian gave Phoenix a summary of what had happened.

Phoenix listened without saying anything. Neither did she interrupt Chen Xiaolian in the middle. After he had finished speaking, there was a complicated expression on Phoenix’s face.

“... .. that’s it?” Phoenix narrowed her eyes and looked at Chen Xiaolian. She said, “You... actually, you could have secretly informed me about it. Secretly inform me.”

Chen Xiaolian looked at Phoenix and he suddenly raised his hand to point at the rooftop. He said, “I recall that not too long ago, you were the one who told me not to be too trustful.”

Phoenix did not reply.

After a moment of silence, she slowly said, “The system gave us 200 marks. 100 marks for successfully protecting the system’s guide character and another 100 marks for solving Jack the Ripper’s case.”

“En,” Chen Xiaolian answered while nodding his head.

“My female intuition tells me... there is definitely something that you are hiding from me,” Phoenix suddenly said.

“Why do I feel that... you may have acquired more from this instance dungeon compared to us?”

Chen Xiaolian laughed and looked at Phoenix. Then, he spoke in a very serious manner, “Regardless of whether that is true or false... why should I tell you about it?”

Phoenix’s eyebrows were raised in response. Before she could say anything, Chen Xiaolian smiled and continued, “All right, there is something I can tell you.”

“What is it?”

“We... may have gotten real lucky here.”

“Lucky?”

“En.” Chen Xiaolian’s face turned serious. “At the final moment, Colombo became very powerful. He acquired four vengeful spirits... simply through the power of four; he nearly turned us into dough. Additionally, Colombo had utilized some form of black magic, allowing him to absorb the four vengeful spirits to transform himself into a monster that resembled a Grim Reaper.”

“... .. I saw it,” Phoenix replied coldly. “I could feel the powerful aura released by him. However... no matter how strong he was, didn’t he end up getting killed by you? The one in white who finished off Colombo...”

“My pet,” Chen Xiaolian replied coolly. “That was not what I meant. Rather, Colombo should have been much stronger than that.”

“Much... stronger?”

“Don’t forget, according to the storyline, he should have killed off five victims. Then, he should have merged with those five vengeful spirits. However, the Colombo we encountered only completed four murders and was able to gather only four vengeful spirits.”

...

"I have always considered myself as a lucky person."

Tian Lie picked up a piece of tissue and wiped his mouth. He continued, "The first instance dungeon quest that I completed by myself was actually Jack the Ripper quest."

"Why?"

"Because this instance dungeon... one could say it is extremely difficult, but one could also say it is extremely easy," answered Tian Lie with a faint smile. "The key lies in... how you deal with it."

Jean became curious and asked, "You... how did you deal with it?"

"Very simple." Tian Lie kneaded his eyebrows and exhaled. There was an indifferent expression on his face. "Back when I received this quest, I believed that the purpose of this quest is to stop Jack the Ripper from killing the five victims before killing Jack himself. Isn't that right?"

"... .. that sounds true."

"Hmm, and there you have it," Tian Lie said coolly. "To stop him from killing, how should you do that?"

Jean considered the question and answered, "Maybe I can go find the victims and set up an ambush. When the killer appears, ambush him! Or... find the victims and protect them. Wait for the killer to come to me."

Tian Lie laughed. It was a very gleeful laughter.

At present, he had the appearance of an ordinary Caucasian. However, a strange light flashed within his pair of pupils.

"You... did not do it that way?" Jean frowned.

"Of course not. If I did, I fear that I would have lost my life in that instance dungeon."

Tian Lie suddenly began acting like a little child, exhibiting a childish show-off attitude. "You know, the difficulty of this instance dungeon depends on... Jack the Ripper's strength. For every victim he kills, the

stronger he gets. Let's assume that this is a game then, the strength of this ultimate boss, Jack the Ripper, would depend on many victims he gets to kill."

"En... so, you would have to find a way to protect those victims so that they would not be killed by him, right? Did you manage to keep them all alive?" Jean asked.

"Your first sentence is correct. Your second is wrong," Tian Lie answered coolly. "What I needed to do was ensure that Jack the Ripper did not get to kill them. However, there was no need for me to keep them alive."

"... .."

"Back then... after the quest begun, the first thing I did was... to find the victims and personally kill them!" Tian Lie's face broke into a scary grin, exposing the whites of his teeth!

"... ki... kill?"

"Yes, I killed them all," Tian Lie replied slowly. "All that matters was that they did not die in the hands of Jack the Ripper."

Jean was left speechless!

This way of thought... was wondrous!

Additionally, it was something that normal people would not have considered!

In order to prevent the storyline's victim from being killed off by the killer... kill off the victims first?!

"You... how could you bring yourself to do something like that? Weren't you fearful that your actions would mess up the storyline and trigger a bad ending?"

"I've got big balls." Tian Lie took a gulp of cola.

...

"In other words, Colombo failed to get five vengeful spirits in the end! Thus, he did not manage to achieve his most powerful form?" Phoenix's

eyes flickered as she asked.

“From what he said in the end, that was probably it.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Phoenix and the both of them exchanged glances.

The two of them recalled the incident where they encountered the sniper attack!

“Someone... is helping us out from the dark?” Phoenix blurted out.

Chen Xiaolian sighed and his expression turned extremely serious. He said, “I think so too... there is also the possibility that someone had tried to stop us from completing the quest and inadvertently helped us. However... I believe that line of thought does not make sense. Because, if they had wanted to stop us, just attacking once is simply too little. Thus...”

“I feel that there might really be someone helping us out from the dark!”

...

“Back in the instance dungeon, there were also five victims. I killed off three of them,” Tian Lie said coolly. “In the end, when Jack the Ripper revealed himself, his strength was not that powerful... for the me back then who had yet to become strong, I was only barely able to defeat him.

“That is why I think that I am really lucky.

“Back then, if I had not thought in such a ridiculously absurd manner and came up with the method to disrupt the situation, the one to die in the end would likely be me – because I was alone. Since there was only me, I feared that I was unable to gather up the victims. Additionally, to protect them from harm with my strength alone – I simply did not possess the strength to do that.

“Thus, I could only do things in reverse. Before the killer could act, kill those victims!”

Hearing that, Jean muttered out in a low voice: “Maniac, freak.” Then,

the Frenchman appeared to have thought of something. He said, "Eh... I recall you saying something during these past two days... you normally wouldn't kill women."

"There is a bottom-line for any principle," Tian Lie answered coolly. "A principle that does not have a bottom-line is idiocy. If the first enemy sent to face me is a woman, should I just lie down and let them kill me? As for those victims... although they were not my enemies within the game... due to some reason, my heart weren't that troubled when I killed them."

"Oh?"

"Because... their profession is... that kind of woman," Tian Lie said softly. "I hate those kind of women. They deserve to die."

As he was saying those words, a trace of prejudice flashed across his eyes.

Chapter 204: Thing of Legend

“Well then, that means our cooperation was a success and is now over.”

Phoenix stood up and her gaze swept its way toward Chen Xiaolian. Looking into his eyes, she said, “Although I know you are concealing something from me... that is not important. I have no interest in exploring other people’s secret.”

After saying that, Phoenix smiled. “I have to say, this has been a very enjoyable partnership, Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian. Hopefully, we won’t meet as enemies next time.”

Chen Xiaolian too, stood up. He looked back into Phoenix’s eyes and said, “... .. I wish you good luck.”

“That is hard to predict.” Phoenix shook her head and replied, “I have never been a huge believer of luck – I mean, if our world is an artificial world, then the so-called luck may just be a form of rule set by the system.”

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian did not say anything in return.

“Until next time.”

Phoenix waved goodbye to Chen Xiaolian.

Her team members: Monster, the Titan brothers and Dagger were standing not far away. Dagger threw a baleful glare toward Chen Xiaolian before turning his head away.

“Guild Leader, can I kill that brat?” Bei Tai muttered.

“Don’t go around causing a havoc. Our instance dungeon is not over,” said Lun Tai who went to pat his younger brother’s head.

...

Before Phoenix left, Chen Xiaolian moved to shake hands with her. Unexpectedly, the young woman stepped closer and gave him a brief, gentle hug. She then smiled. “Try to live longer oh.”

Phoenix and the others quickly left. They moved straight on without

showing any hesitation.

Back in the warehouse, there were two other fellows beside Chen Xiaolian and his team.

Dr Mu and... Colombo.

A cold corpse was all that was left of Colombo now. His spirit body had been absorbed utterly by Bai Qi.

As for Dr Mu, he appeared to still be in an unconscious state.

“Do we need to get him to a hospital?” asked Lun Tai as he turned to look at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian considered the suggestion. Then, he shook his head. “This London instance dungeon had yet to end. If we send him to the hospital, the police will come. That might cause problems for us.”

He recalled what Colombo had said back then. He had only used a powerful and concentrated anaesthetic agent on Dr Mu. Thus, Chen Xiaolian decided against sending Dr Mu to the hospital.

“Find someplace to let him rest. Then... we’ll leave. Hmm, after the instance dungeon ends, everything should end up being refreshed.”

They were currently in London. Under these circumstances, for Chen Xiaolian and his team who were clearly Chinese people, looking for a hotel to stay in would prove quite difficult.

As the London instance dungeon had yet to end, London was still not refreshed. Due to that... the Jack the Ripper’s case had resulted in the police looking for them.

The three of them left the warehouse and Chen Xiaolian brought out a spare car from his Storage Watch. As they were getting on the car, Chen Xiaolian carried Dr Mu with him and placed him in the back seat of the car. He unintentionally reached into his pocket and felt something solid.

He pulled it out to inspect it...

A hexagram pattern.

Universal Access Badge?

Chen Xiaolian immediately recalled how Phoenix had given him a hug before leaving.

As he gripped the badge. Chen Xiaolian could not help but fall into a daze.

“Where do we go now?” asked Bei Tai, who was seated in the driver’s seat.

“... .. just try to find a hotel.” Chen Xiaolian held on tight to the badge.

With this badge, things will become much easier.

Utilizing the badge, Chen Xiaolian was able to casually get a room in a hotel – even though he did not produce any documents to identify himself, no one became suspicious of him.

“This item is simply too useful,” said Chen Xiaolian with a sigh.

After placing Dr Mu in the hotel room and placing the ‘Do Not Disturb’ sign on, Chen Xiaolian left the hotel.

“Where do we go to next? Have the next phase of the quest been issued?” Within the car, the three of them rolled down the windows and breathed in the humid air coming from the outside.

It was presently past ten o’clock at night.

Chen Xiaolian looked at the time and said, “It should be coming soon.”

“Hopefully the second phase of the quest won’t be too difficult...”

“I wonder what the marks are for.”

The two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai muttered.

It was at that instant that the system sent over a prompt.

[System prompt: Congratulations to Meteor Rock Guild for completing the first phase of the random quests x1.

[Second random quest issued is as follows: Please arrive at the Tower of London within 30 minutes.

[By arriving within the Tower of London area within 30 minutes, you will be able to acquire the follow-up prompt for this quest. If you fail to arrive there within 30 minutes, please wait for the next issue of random quests. The corresponding amount of marks will be deducted.]

[Prompt: Completing random quests will garner you marks for this instance dungeon. Marks will play an important role in the follow-up phase of the quest and the ranking of the participants.]

[Meteor Rock Guild's current accumulated marks: 200 marks.]

"Tower of London?" Chen Xiaolian frowned and shared the system prompt with Lun Tai and Bei Tai. None of them was able to figure any clues out from there.

In the last random quest, the destination area was Whitechapel. Hearing the name, one could associate it with Jack the Ripper's case... as for the Tower of London, it was an infamous ancient building in the UK. Trying to guess the contents of the next quest was no easy matter.

That was due to the amount of history contained within the Tower of London, one spanning up to a thousand years. Countless well-known historical events had occurred there... to speculate which one of those would be selected by the system to be the quest's storyline would be too much of a task for Chen Xiaolian – even though he was a web writer who had read up on many information regarding the Tower of London, it was still too much for him.

"We'll discuss about it after we get there!" Chen Xiaolian decided.
"We'll know the results in 30 minutes time."

...

The Tower of London, located on the north of the River Thames and also situated near the famed London Bridge.

It had nearly a thousand years' worth of history contained within.

This place was originally a military fortress. The origin of this place was somewhat interesting.

Roughly a thousand years ago, the King of England died, leaving no heir behind. Thus, the England noble Harold was appointed as the King.

That incident infuriated a certain fellow.

To be more exact, it was a certain Frenchman, the French Duke of Normandy. It was a fellow named William – this fellow was the cousin of the deceased King of England.

Thus, he became dissatisfied.

Damn it! The one to inherit the throne should have been ME!

It had to be said, in the history of Europe's medieval period, the lineage of the various royals were very chaotic. Due to various matchmakings and marriages, the royal members of each kingdom were pretty much related to each other.

Thus, the Duke of Normandy did something incredible.

Invade England through the seas!

Hmm, he was the Duke of Normandy, that Normandy of France... the same one in the famed Allied Invasion of Normandy in World War II.

The Tower of London was constructed by this incredible person during the war – back then, he had already landed upon England and begun his attacks on the people of England. He had some men construct a military fortress at the north bank of the River Thames. This was in preparation for him to enter London and be crowned as King.

And so, the Tower of London was built.

In the beginning, this place was used as a military fortress. Then, it was slowly given other functions: military armoury, treasury, mint, palace...

On the way there, Chen Xiaolian told Lun Tai and Bei Tai everything he knew about the history of the Tower of London.

The two of them clearly did not know about that. However, hearing that the Tower of London was built by a Frenchman, they became curious.

“The Frenchman actually became the King of England?” Bei Tai stared.

“Yes, he was William, the Duke of Normandy. More accurately, he could not exactly be considered a Frenchman. Additionally... the royalty of Europe, their relations were interlinked and their lineage was a chaotic mess.” Chen Xiaolian smiled. “However, he did indeed conquer England and become its King. His crown was passed down to four generations. In the history of the UK, the period of time was known as the Norman Dynasty.”

“I still don’t get it... some French dude actually conquered England. Did he bring a large army with him or something?” Lun Tai asked.

Chen Xiaolian considered the question and answered, “I am not too knowledgeable on this matter. However... from what I’ve read, his army was not that large. There were only around 10,000 men. Additionally... a large portion of it consisted of mercenaries.

“During the battle against the England army, William was extremely fortunate. It was said that the King of England was coincidentally shot down by an arrow in the middle of the battlefield. After hearing the news that their King had died, majority of the England army chose to retreat.”

“So, he was an extremely lucky fellow?” Lun Tai laughed.

“Hell knows. I am not an expert on UK history,” Chen Xiaolian replied with a smile.

At approximately eleven o’clock, their car arrived near the Tower of London.

The place had become one of the most famous attractions in London and it played host to millions of visitors each year.

At night, the Tower of London was naturally closed.

The street was very narrow... in fact; most of the streets in London were very narrow.

They parked their car by the street; Chen Xiaolian and his team members were in no hurry to get down from the car. Instead, they waited quietly for the next system quest to be issued.

Then, another car drove over from the other direction.

It was a black coloured Land Rover. The car was stopped opposite of Chen Xiaolian and his team. Soon, two men stepped out from the car.

One of them was an average looking figure wearing a thick outer suit commonly worn by people of the UK.

The other man had a larger stature, with a rather bulbous nose on his face.

The Briton with the average stature, who was standing far away, cast his gaze at Chen Xiaolian. A peculiar smile appeared on his face.

He even waved his hand toward Chen Xiaolian.

“... ..could it be? Will we have partners for this time’s quest as well?” Chen Xiaolian was momentarily surprised.

The other party appeared very genial. He had a very wide smile on his face as he simply crossed the street to approach them.

He strode until he was standing before Chen Xiaolian. Then, he gently rapped the car window.

“Hi!”

...

Tian Lie stood outside the car with a smile on his face as he looked at Chen Xiaolian who was seated inside.

Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a moment. Then, he opened the car door and stepped out. Lun Tai and Bei Tai were quick to follow suit and they stood vigilantly behind Chen Xiaolian.

“What a coincidence. Did you also come here to accept the quest?” asked Tian Lie with squinted eyes.

Chen Xiaolian regarded the Briton before him whom he had never met before. He had a feeling that there was something weird about the warm-hearted expression on his face.

“Looks like we are the same type,” said Tian Lie. He turned his head

around to look at the man with bulbous nose, who was standing behind. “This is my companion; his name is Jean, a Frenchman. We are also here after receiving the random quest telling us to come to this Tower of London. You guys too, right?”

“... ..yes.” Chen Xiaolian hesitated for a bit. However, after the cooperation with Phoenix’s guild, he had become more experienced in dealing with such a situation. “We are from Meteor Rock Guild. I am the Guild Leader, Chen Xiaolian. If you don’t mind me asking, you are...”

“My name is Conan.”

Cough cough cough cough!

Chen Xiaolian nearly choked on his own saliva!

“What? Your name is what again?”

“Conan,” Tian Lie answered with a smile. “The Conan from Conan Doyle, the fellow who wrote the Sherlock Holmes book.”

All right then...

As long as you are not the little kid with the big bowtie who brings death wherever you go, everything will be fine [1]!

Chen Xiaolian sighed. He then attempted to sound him out. “In other words... we received the same random quest?”

“It seems like it,” Tian Lie replied with a rather perplexing tone of voice. He continued, “This is truly surprising.”

Chen Xiaolian did not catch the other meaning in the other person’s tone. He considered for a moment before looking at the fellow before him. He asked, “If so... a cooperation?”

Tian Lie’s eyes exhibited a smiling look and he extended his hand out. “A cooperation!”

At the same time, the system prompt arrived.

[System prompt: Your team has successfully arrived at the designated area within the specified time. Acquisition of this random quest is

successful. The random quest is follows:

[Enter the Tower of London and acquire the thing of legend!

{(ONLY_ THE_ KING_ CAN_ TAKE_ THE_ SWORD_ FROM_ THE_ STONE!)

[Quest must be completed before the first ray of dawn. Otherwise, you will have failed the quest and the corresponding amount of marks will be deducted. If all the team members die in the course of performing the quest, the quest will be considered a failure and the corresponding marks will be deducted.]

Thing of legend?

{(ONLY_ THE_ KING_ CAN_ TAKE_ THE_ SWORD_ FROM_ THE_ STONE!)

Chen Xiaolian was shocked.

This thing isn't it something that exists only in the legends? This is not true history oyy!

...

—

1 He is referring to the protagonist from the Japanese detective manga series Conan.

Chapter 205: Phantom In White

{ONLY_ THE_ KING_ CAN_ TAKE_ THE_ SWORD_ FROM_ THE_ STONE!}

Only the King can pull the sword out of the stone.

This... isn't this the bloody infamous Sword in the Stone?!

Chen Xiaolian gave a wry smile.

But... didn't it said that this is a Historical Type instance dungeon?

You said this is a 'Historical Type' oyy!

Even though legend of the Sword in the Stone is an infamous one... but, but that is not true history argh!

That is just a bloody legend, man!

In true history, there is no Sword in the Stone!

Naturally, this did not mean that Chen Xiaolian was unable to accept a storyline that was not truly historical.

The instance dungeons that he had participated before this, be it the 72 Demon Pillars or the Tokyo instance dungeon, they had nothing to do with reality.

The problem lied in the fact that this time's London instance dungeon had given the prompt: Historical Type!

In the earlier random quest with Jack the Ripper, the storyline was created using true events that occurred within history as a template.

At present, it suddenly took a different turn... and it came up with this Sword in the Stone?

Again, that was not to say that storyline involving legends was something unacceptable. However, what Chen Xiaolian had prepared for was real history of the UK.

However, this bloody legend of King Arthur suddenly popped out.

System, are you pulling a prank on me?

The story of King Arthur itself was a legend. However, there were presently so many versions of it; the number could be compared to the number of fur on an ox. How was anyone to figure out which?

Only God knew which one the system had selected to use as template for this storyline.

If they end up meeting Arturia Pendragon after going in to search for this Sword in the Stone, then what [1]?

“Would Arturia Pendragon really pop out?” Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly in secret.

Considering the outrageousness of the system and how it managed to cook up The Mech in the last Tokyo instance dungeon...

For it to cook up Saber in this London instance dungeon... did not seem improbable!

“Enter the Tower of London and find the thing of legend.” Chen Xiaolian calmed himself down and said slowly, “Obviously, this thing of legend should be the ‘Sword in the Stone’, the so-called sword of the King.”

“We have until the first ray of dawn,” said Tian Lie as he checked the time. “It is presently slightly over eleven o’clock. We have a few hours before dawn arrives.”

“The process involved will certainly not be easy,” said Chen Xiaolian. He stood at the edge of the street and regarded the palace area of the Tower of London... at night; it appeared as though it was a place capable of devouring humans.

...

“Still can’t find Jean?”

There was a grim expression on Culkin’s face. He stood on the rooftop, observing London that was wreathed in night.

Lei Hu who was standing behind him shook his head. “Sasha has taken control of all the surveillance cameras in London. But, he still could not find Jean...”

Culkin suddenly turned around and whispered, "Tell Sasha to give it up."

"Give... give up?" Lei Hu was shocked. "But Jean is our companion after all..."

"It's been over 48 hours." There was a layer of coldness upon Culkin's face. "If someone had made a move against him... 48 hours, it is likely that Jean is already dead. Additionally... Sasha is an expert who can hack into London's surveillance system. For him to be incapable of finding Jean, I suspect that the one who made a move against him possess an ability similar to Sasha's, the ability to control mechanical or electronic instruments."

He sighed and turned to Lei Hu. "We still have our quest to complete. We cannot waste too much time."

Pausing, he suddenly said, "Right, did anything else happen today?"

"The police are still investigating the serial murders case. I suspect... this might have been triggered by some storyline that certain game participants are involved in."

"Hmm, keep an eye on that." Culkin kneaded his forehead and said slowly, "If there is no need, we do not want to make contact with other game participants. Just do what we need to do properly... remember my words, stay in the dark forever. That way, we'll be able to see things clearly."

...

They entered past the outer walls of the Tower of London – for Chen Xiaolian and his group, it was not something difficult. However, Tian Lie chose to reveal his ability.

Chen Xiaolian saw him move toward the surveillance and alarm equipment that was set up on the outside before pressing his arm upon their surface. The surveillance equipment quickly lost power and the surveillance cameras were lowered down.

Could it be? This fellow's ability is the same as Roddy: Mechanical Heart? Chen Xiaolian speculated.

“Let’s go.” Tian Lie smiled widely and he took the initiative to move in the front. He did not mind leaving his back to Chen Xiaolian and appeared devoid of any state of vigilance.

This action of his caused Chen Xiaolian to feel perplexed...

This fellow, he could put so much trust in some strangers that he had just encountered?

Is he simply reckless, or... did he have that much confidence in his strength?

At that instant, a burst of “shuo shuo” sounds could be heard from behind. Chen Xiaolian turned his head to look...

In the night, a flock of black ravens with glistening feathers flew over and landed upon the branches of some trees.

One of the ravens perching atop a tree turned its head over. It quietly observed the group of people who were entering the Tower of London in the night...

“I hate this atmosphere,” Chen Xiaolian muttered.

...

The Tower of London was, in fact, a castle-styled building with a dense number of towers.

There was a militarized tower defence system in its perimeter.

The area that Chen Xiaolian and his group entered was the building attached to the Tower of London, the Crown Jewels Exhibition hall – it was also the most famous place in the Tower of London.

They walked into the Crown Jewels Exhibition hall. In the darkness, the huge hall was completely silent.

The architecture of everything inside was typical of the Norman style: Thick stone walls and small windows. Even during the day, it was likely that not much light would be able to come inside, much less at night.

A thick round pillar stood within the hall and the whole building was

shaped in a square.

They walked into the Crown Jewels Exhibition hall. Before Chen Xiaolian could say anything, Jean, who was beside Tian Lie blurted, “Buildings built by the people of the UK are all so rigid. If this was built by us French, we would have made this a work of art.”

Tian Lie did not say anything. He simply walked in the front.

The Crown Jewels Exhibition hall was an exhibition hall opened for the public.

There were various square shaped glass cabinets within the hall. All of them contained precious objects belonging to the royalty.

However, the thick walls and the small windows, in addition to the fact that it was night gave the interior of the hall a grim and depressing atmosphere.

“Hey, look at those glass cabinets. Don’t they seem to resemble coffins? Under such circumstances... ha ha ha,” Tian Lie suddenly turned to Chen Xiaolian and cracked a joke.

The corners of Chen Xiaolian’s mouth twitched. He had to admit, Tian Lie’s words were fairly true, but...

“That joke is not funny,” Chen Xiaolian replied coolly. “We should look carefully. Try to see if the Sword in the Stone is here. This is where they place the objects belonging to the royalty.”

As they searched, Tian Lie appeared to be deliberately following beside Chen Xiaolian and they carefully searched each of the glass cabinets.

There were many extraordinary objects there. There were the sceptres that signified the royal authority, the crowns, royal swords...

They carefully checked the royal swords for a long time. However, they did not find the legendary Sword in the Stone among them – at least, none of them appeared to resemble the Sword in the Stone.

The royal swords placed on display there came with a text description. After looking at one of them, Chen Xiaolian sighed. “Not this one... this is

the royal coronation sword gifted to the King of England by the Bishop of England, not the Sword in the Stone.”

“Quick, look over here!” Bei Tai, who was standing nearby, suddenly called out.

Standing before a glass cabinet, he pointed toward the treasure placed inside it.

It was a crown! Beside it was a cross studded with a ruby – Chen Xiaolian came over and read the text description and said, “This is Queen Victoria’s crown.”

“Victoria? The one who does *** ?” Bei Tai snickered.

Chen Xiaolian glanced at him and replied, “You need to go read up more when you return home, bro.” Pausing for a moment, he smiled wryly and said, “Queen Victoria, the greatest Queen in the history of the UK.”

After saying that, he pointed at a sceptre placed beside it and said, “This should be the most expensive one. See that diamond embedded inside it? That is the legendary Star of Africa, the largest diamond in the world.”

Bei Tai’s eyes shone and he raised a tactical flashlight to shine it upon the object. Under the rays of light from the tactical flashlight, the Star of Africa glittered brilliantly.

Bei Tai appeared moved by it. He swallowed his saliva and said, “Good stuff! That... can we take it away?”

Chen Xiaolian was shocked. Lun Tai stepped forward, gave his younger brother a slap, and smiled as he said, “Are you in serious need of money? Or are you already prepared to be pursued by the UK royalty and the whole world? Even if you did take this thing away, you won’t be able to take it out. Once someone catches sight of it, it will stir up countless troubles.”

Bei Tai was somewhat saddened. He looked at the sceptre with reluctance and said, “Err... even if I don’t get to take it out, I can still admire it at home whenever I have nothing to do.”

“Don’t think about nonsensical stuff.” Lun Tai dragged Bei Tai away.

As for Chen Xiaolian, he was attracted by another object within the Crown Jewels Exhibition hall.

“Do you know this item?”

Tian Lie had, at an unknown time appeared beside Chen Xiaolian. Chen Xiaolian turned around to glance at him before nodding his head.

In the cabinet before them was a gold bottle. A gold spoon was set down beside it.

“Holy oil,” said Chen Xiaolian as he regarded the bottle. He thought about it. “The mark of the Holy Spirit’s grace... this thing is of a higher class compared to holy water.”

He said with a sigh, “Unfortunately, this is the UK. If this is the Vatican... I would take it! A holy oil bottle from the Vatican would probably be the most effective against those evil-type creatures.”

Tian Lie looked at Chen Xiaolian and he suddenly broke into a smile. “For you to be saying that, it seems you have encountered some evil-type creatures? Could it have been during the previous random quest?”

Chen Xiaolian looked at him and asked him instead, “What about you? In this London instance dungeon, what quest did you do earlier?”

“Kill a few people and did a few things, nothing special.” Tian Lie shrugged his shoulders.

Then, Tian Lie changed the topic of conversation. “From the looks of it, the UK’s royal family does not have much items here... this place is neither big nor small, but it only has so little items. It seems there are not many royal crown jewels.”

Chen Xiaolian smiled. “The items displayed here are all items with historical values. It would be more accurate to say that there are more cultural relics here than real crown jewels... the royal family would never display all their crown jewels here.

“Besides...”

Pausing, Chen Xiaolian said slowly, "This may be the fault of Oliver Cromwell. Back then, when that Lord Protector overthrew the royal family, he gave the order to sell off many of the royal family's treasures in order to raise funding for the military.

"A large portion of it was scattered among the people. Hell knows where they might have ended up. Who knows, some of them could be secretly hidden within a grand collector's treasure room.

"The royal family have been trying to recover them. But after hundreds of years, they were only able to buy back a small portion of what was lost."

"It seems you did your homework." Tian Lie looked at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian glanced back at Tian Lie and said, "This is a Historical Type instance dungeon after all. Some information gathering is essential."

Tian Lie remained silent for a moment. Then, he said, "Oh? So... about this Sword in the Stone, what do you know about it?"

"Quite a bit," replied Chen Xiaolian. Then, he suddenly laughed. "Though, I fear it is all useless."

"... ..?" Tian Lie looked on curiously at Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian suddenly frowned. He narrowed his eyes and stared intently at Tian Lie. "Mr Conan, you... you should be a Briton, right? As a Briton, could it be that you do not know about the legend of your own nation? This Sword in the Stone is the UK's most famous legend."

Tian Lie was stunned for a while. Then he laughed out and answered, "I don't read much, all right?"

His reply left Chen Xiaolian utterly speechless.

However, Chen Xiaolian quickly calmed down. He watched as Tian Lie turned around and walked away. Then, he suddenly said in a low tone of voice, "You are not a Briton."

"... .." Tian Lie halted his steps.

Chen Xiaolian slowly continued, "Although your attire and appearance

look a lot like a Briton, I am certain that you are not.”

“Why so?” Tian Lie turned around. He narrowed his eyes as he looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“Just now, you wondered why there was so little objects here... I believe that Britons would not be so unfamiliar with this place. You know too little about your own nation’s history. Besides, even if we ignore that, how could you not know about the legend of the Sword in the Stone?”

“What about it?” Tian Lie said with indifference. “Does my origin have anything to do with our cooperation to complete this quest?”

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian was silent for a bit. Surprisingly, he did not choose to pursue the matter. Instead, he said coolly, “It appears not.”

“There you have it.” Tian Lie shook his head and said, “I will not pry into your secrets. Please don’t ask me about mine.”

After saying that, Tian Lie turned around and shouted out to Jean, Lun Tai and Bei Tai who were checking out the other areas.

“Let’s go. I think the Sword in the Stone is definitely not here... the system will not give us a quest with such a low level of difficulty. We will not be able to find it right from the start. It must be hidden somewhere that is not easy to find.”

Tian Lie and Jean moved in the vanguard position and they walked toward the other passageway situated beside the Crown Jewels Exhibition hall.

Chen Xiaolian waited for Bei Tai and Lun Tai to come up beside him. Then, he silently contacted them using the guild channel.

“Be careful with this Conan ... he’s weird.”

...

The core building of the Tower of London was naturally the famed White Tower.

The place was originally a military fortress, built in the typical style of the Normans. It was a square-shaped military fortress surrounded by a

formation of towers.

Modern metal doors were constructed into the passageways connecting the towers together. However, with Tian Lie in their group, they were able to easily open those doors.

Seeing that increased the suspicion in Chen Xiaolian that this Conan fellow's ability might be something similar to Roddy's Mechanical Heart.

He was simply a humanoid master key.

The White Tower was shaped in a square with a height of up to nearly 30 metres. There were three floors and two walls surrounding it.

Chen Xiaolian and his group approached the White Tower through the peripheral area.

They approached the White Tower by going through a lawn yard on the left.

During that time, they could hear the unbearable sound of cawing coming from the ravens perched upon the distant trees.

Occasionally, there would be the sound of something flying about.

"This place looks just like a graveyard," Bei Tai grumbled. "Only a cemetery will have this many crows."

"Those are ravens," said Chen Xiaolian. After thinking about it for a moment, he suddenly smiled out. "Although, it is not wrong to say that this is a cemetery."

"What?" Bei Tai turned to look at Chen Xiaolian before turning around to observe the surroundings. "This is really a cemetery?"

"No... more accurately, this is the guillotine."

"... .."

Chen Xiaolian observed the ravens in the distant trees and said slowly, "This is not an ordinary guillotine. This was made specifically for the execution of those with distinguished statuses, nobles and members of the royal family. I recall reading about it. Those who died here were all

prominent figures in history.”

Bei Tai shrank his neck and exhaled. “Son of a bitch! What bad luck! We just finished off that Jack the Ripper and now we ended up in this ghastly place... say, this quest, would we also end up encountering vengeful spirits?”

Bei Tai’s face was contorted as he continued, “We don’t have any firearms that could work against vengeful spirits.”

Likewise, the same expression could be seen on Chen Xiaolian’s face.

If they were to encounter vengeful spirits again... or another Jack the Ripper like the forensic doctor, Colombo, one who could utilize black magic to manipulate dead spirits...

He did not have any good methods against that.

Bai Qi had already been summoned once. Within the next twenty-four hours, they should forget about putting their hopes on Bai Qi.

If so...

At that moment, for some unknown reason, or perhaps their actions of walking through the lawn triggered the flock of ravens perching atop the trees...

The flock of ravens suddenly released a burst of “shuo shuo” sounds and flew up in unison. Then, they flew around the lawn in a circle!

The goose bumps inducing sounds of “caw caw caw caw” descended down upon them from the sky.

Hearing those sounds in the dead of the night caused a chill to run down their spines!

Bei Tai was unable to restrain himself and he pulled out a gun and pointed it up the sky. Then, after considering the situation, he kept the gun and spat out, “Damn it, if not for the concern that I might alert others... if only I knew, I would have brought bow and arrows! Damnable crows!”

“The ravens are the symbol of luck for the UK royalty,” said a smiling

Chen Xiaolian. "The UK's royal family believes in a legend. They believe that the raven is a divine bird. Should the day come when the ravens disappear from the Tower of London, then their kingdom will perish. Thus, these ravens are usually treated as darlings and there will be some special people to feed them."

Hearing the grating sounds of "caw caw", Bei Tai could not help but utter out a laugh. "Divine bird? The UK's royal family sure have special taste!"

The three of them smiled as they discussed it and they quickly moved through the lawn toward the outer wall of the Tower of London.

Tian Lie had already opened up the door to the tower. He waved to the three of them.

Chen Xiaolian stepped forward quickly. He observed Tian Lie and the tower standing behind him.

At that instant, Chen Xiaolian's face suddenly contorted violently!

In that short moment, he seemed to have caught sight of a white coloured shadow!

The figure appeared human in shape, and it wore white robes... although he only caught a glimpse, Chen Xiaolian was certain that he did not make a mistake!

It seemed that... on the second floor of the tower, in a corner of a certain corridor, a white coloured dress had flashed by!

Although its movement was as fast as the wind, it was clearly the silhouette of a woman!

The late night, the darkness brought by the night, the ancient castle and the ravens...

The figure of the woman in white flashed through the corner of the corridor...

A burst of cold wind blew forward and Chen Xiaolian abruptly felt a chill within his heart!

“You guys... did you see that?”

“What?” asked Lun Tai.

“... ..” Chen Xiaolian stared at the second floor of the tower and hesitated for a moment. Just as he was about to tell them what he just saw...

At that instant, a peculiar sound entered into Chen Xiaolian’s ears.

“He he he he ah...”

It was a woman’s voice.

The sound of soft laughter was inexplicably eerie and it seemed to have directly entered Chen Xiaolian’s ears!

Chen Xiaolian’s body promptly stiffened and he quickly summoned out Fearless War Axe and gripped it in his hands!

“Guild Leader?” The two brothers, Lun Tai and Bei Tai saw how Chen Xiaolian had suddenly summoned out his weapon, looking as though he was facing a powerful enemy. They asked, “What is it?”

“... didn’t you fellows hear that?” Chen Xiaolian’s expression grew more distorted. “That laughing sound.”

“... what laughing sound?” There was a perplexed expression on both Lun Tai and Bei Tai’s faces.

Chen Xiaolian’s expression flickered. He clenched down hard on his teeth and said, “Just now...”

Before he could finish what he wanted to say, his ears heard the sound again!

“He he he he ah...” The gentle laughter seemingly carried strange rhythm with it. However, it brought no pleasing thoughts with it. Instead, it only brought a chill down one’s spine!

Additionally, this time around, the sound of laughter that Chen Xiaolian heard was not soft.

After the burst of laughter was over, one word after another entered

Chen Xiaolian's ears.

It was a woman's voice, filled with mournful resentment.

"My neck... hurts so much... he he he he..."

Chen Xiaolian's face stiffened!

...

The moment they saw the twisted expression on Chen Xiaolian's face, both Lun Tai and Bei Tai became aware that something was not right. The two of them quickly stood beside Chen Xiaolian, one on the left and the other on the right. They vigilantly surveyed their surroundings.

"Guild Leader? What is it exactly?" Lun Tai said in a low voice.

"I heard a voice," said Chen Xiaolian with a sigh. "It was a woman's voice... you fellows did not hear it?"

"No." Bei Tai shook his head.

Chen Xiaolian raised his hand to point at the second floor of the tower and said, "Just now, I saw a white shadow flash by over there!"

Bei Tai had wanted to interrupt him. However, Lun Tai who had a vigilant look on his face pressed his hand down on Bei Tai's shoulder and whispered, "Don't interrupt Guild Leader when he is talking! En... Xiaolian, what else? What else did you discover?"

"There is woman speaking into my ears." Chen Xiaolian's expression turned baffled. "She said... her neck hurts a lot."

The atmosphere turned eerie!

At the same time, the cawing sounds from the ravens descended from the skies in bursts...

—

1 Arturia Pendragon is one of the main characters in the Fate anime series. She is the female version of King Arthur and plays the role of Saber. On a different note, the sword she wields is called Caliburn. I was tempted to just type in Caliburn for Sword in the Stone. But for now, I'll

stick to the literal translation of 'Sword in the Stone'.

Chapter 206: Woman in White

Gulp.

Bei Tai forcefully swallowed down a mouthful of saliva. He looked at Chen Xiaolian and smiled wryly. "Guild Leader, the atmosphere here is eerie enough as it is, you... you are not just trying to scare us, are you?"

"Be serious!" Lun Tai glared at his younger brother. "Xiaolian would never joke around at a time like this."

Then, he looked carefully at Chen Xiaolian and asked, "Just now, you heard that sentence?"

Chen Xiaolian took a deep breath to calm himself. "En, just that sentence. It was a woman's voice. In the beginning, it was soft. Then, it said that her neck hurts so much. Hmm... that was all."

As he spoke, he pointed to the second floor of the tower and said, "There, that is where I saw the shadow."

"Are we seriously going to be doing ghosts again?" The wry smile on Bei Tai's face fell. "Son of a bitch! We just finished a quest with vengeful spirits and now, here we are with another!"

"Don't spout nonsense. Listen to what Xiaolian is saying." Lun Tai shook his head.

Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered and he observed the surroundings. He watched the flock of ravens flying in the sky above and said with a heavy voice, "We'll continue our discussion inside... everyone be careful."

The White Tower was the main building of the Tower of London. The tower was a city fortress and a typical Norman-styled building. There were three floors in total and there were small windows upon the thick stone walls.

They walked into the first floor of the tower. The first place they had to go through was a long corridor with rough stone walls on both sides. The lamps on the walls were mottled with rust.

Since it was late at night, there was no day light. Tian Lie walked in the vanguard position while holding onto a glow stick. Although the illumination provided by the glow stick could not compare to a tactical flashlight, there were advantages to using it. One of it was the stability of this light source. It cannot be destroyed.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai deliberately walked slowly. Together with Chen Xiaolian, they fell behind. They hold onto a tactical flashlight and a military knife in their hands. As for Chen Xiaolian, he held onto Fearless War Axe as he carefully observed the surroundings.

The first floor was extremely high... the tower was nearly 30 metres in height. However, it only had three floors, making the height of each floor to be extremely shocking.

The tower carried with it a thousand years of history. Although it had undergone successive maintenance works throughout the generations, the ancientness of this building could not be concealed. The smell of age and decay permeated its every corner.

The White Tower with a thousand years' worth of history had been transformed into a weapons exhibition area.

After arriving at the exhibition hall on the first floor, Tian Lie who was in the vanguard position could not help but let out a whistle.

Various type of armour sets were being put on display within the hall of the exhibition area – indeed, all of them was armour sets.

Bei Tai, the military fanatic glanced at them a few times before making his judgement. The armour sets on display here were meant for cavalries and knights. Additionally... there were only armours, no weapons.

The armour worn by Europeans were different compared to the armours worn by the Chinese. Their heavy armour appeared to have completely encased the wearer's entire body. If the visor of the helmet was to be lowered, not a trace of the wearer's limb or skin could be seen.

At such a late hour, under the faint illumination provided by the glow stick, seeing the exhibition hall filled with the various ancient full-body

armour sets and the copper horses...

It felt eerie!

They searched through the first floor for a while, but were unable to find anything. They did not see anything that looked like a Sword in the Stone.

“Let’s go up to the second floor to investigate,” Chen Xiaolian said slowly.

The second floor also displayed armour sets. However, they appeared more ancient. They appeared to be from a far older time period. Because the space between each layer was not that big, they were able to circle around and check them all within a few minutes time.

“This is very strange. Why are there only armour sets here and no weapons?” Lun Tai pursed his lips to the side.

“Let’s go further up and check it out.” Chen Xiaolian frowned.

Beside the exhibition hall stood a fully black coloured European knight armour set. It was a full two metres in height. If one were to wear this full-body armour set, one would end up looking like an iron barrel.

Chen Xiaolian used his hand to gently rap its surface. A “weng weng” sound was issued as a result.

“This looks like a replica, not an antique,” said Chen Xiaolian with a smile. “It’s made of steel. The black colour on its surface is just coating. This should be a piece of modern art.”

“If I had to guess, I’d say this thing weighs over 10 kg.” Lun Tai smiled. “Heaven knows how the people from old England could wear this thing and fight.”

“Maybe they were Awakened ones,” answered a laughing Bei Tai. Then, he said slowly, “All right, I was just joking. This is a full-body heavy armour for mounted riders. The wearer will need the help of several people to wear it. It is the equipment used when riding on horses. If a knight were to walk around with this, he’ll be crushed to death by its

weight. Only demons will run around wearing that.”

...

They made a true discovery on the third floor.

As they walked up the stairs leading to the third floor, the first thing to greet them was something colossal!

Within the darkness, the dim light from the glow stick caused the shadow cast by the colossal thing to envelop them all!

Wings that were spread open, tall and long neck, and an imposingly powerful body...

Shockingly, it was a... dragon?!

...

“Holy shit!”

Bei Tai was the first to exclaim. However, after directing the light from his tactical flashlight upon it while gripping tightly onto the military knife and moving into a combat ready position, he could not help but laugh.

It was indeed a dragon, a gigantic dragon from European legends.

Its entire being gleamed with a metallic lustre and its imposingly powerful body was large. Upon its huge head was a pair of flashing red eyes – resembling rubies.

However, the dragon was just a statue; it was around seven to eight meters tall and its head was seemingly on the verge of making contact with the ceiling.

“Damn, it’s just a fake,” Bei Tai released a sigh of relief and placed down the military knife in his hand.

Chen Xiaolian merely gave the gigantic dragon statue a glance before walking to the side.

There... .. was a mighty looking armour set!

The armour set was stored in a glass case and it brimmed with an

ancient feeling of might and prestige.

The whole armour shone with a dark metallic lustre. As Chen Xiaolian did not have a deep foundation in history, he could not figure out what materials were used to forge this armour. However, he could see that the connecting points of the armour set, the shoulder pads, wrists and breastplate were engraved with fine and beautiful golden patterns.

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at the text describing it. Next, he could not help but feel shocked.

According to the texts there, the owner of this set of armour was...

A famous King in the history of England, Henry VIII.

That was...

Chen Xiaolian was stunned for a moment, his expression turned peculiar and he said, "Turns out to be...the Tudor Dynasty."

...

The Tudor Dynasty.

Thankfully, although Chen Xiaolian had not studied deep into the history of the UK, he was a young man with some geeky tendencies. He generally liked to watch various types of UK dramas.

The famed 'The Tudors' was a drama series that he was highly fond of watching.

Moreover, before 'The Game of Thrones' was made, 'The Tudors' was Chen Xiaolian's most favourite European medieval drama series.

Tudor Dynasty... Henry VIII.

A thought suddenly flashed through Chen Xiaolian's mind.

"I think... I may have figured something out."

...

Then, Chen Xiaolian's face suddenly changed as another burst of soft laughter fell upon his ears!

This time, the sound appeared to have originated for a place close to his ears! In fact... it felt as though the source was right beside his ears!

Chen Xiaolian's body stiffened. He did his best to calm himself before slowly turning around.

Then he saw a woman.

This woman appeared to be standing not far behind him. She had brown hair and snow-white skin. Dressed in white clothes, she stood in the hall, less than two meters from the place Chen Xiaolian was at. Additionally ... she was bare footed.

"You?"

"My neck hurts so much... hurts so much... he he he he a..."

As the woman spoke, she turned around and her body drifted slowly to the side.

"Xiaolian?" Lun Tai noticed something wrong with Chen Xiaolian.

"Shh!" Chen Xiaolian made a silencing gesture before pointing out with his finger.

Both Lun Tai and Bei Tai turned over to look, but saw nothing.

The only thing they could feel was that this third floor of the exhibition contained waves of blowing cold wind.

"You people could not see her?" Chen Xiaolian frowned.

Lun Tai and Bei Tai shook their heads.

Chen Xiaolian became puzzled... why am I the only one who could see her?

"What is it?" Tian Lie walked over.

Chen Xiaolian waved his hand and pointed. Tian Lie's eyes flickered and he directed his gaze in the direction pointed out by Chen Xiaolian. Then, he furrowed his eyebrows. "What did you see?"

"You all cannot see her?" Chen Xiaolian looked at Tian Lie and then at the Frenchman, Jean.

Tian Lie and Jean shook their heads as well.

Chen Xiaolian felt somewhat disappointed. However, he then became excited – perhaps, this is a storyline character for the quest!

No matter what... the other side did not appear to desire any confrontation. If so, there was no harm in making contact.

Chen Xiaolian waved his hand, gesturing to the others to stay still. Then, he gently walked forward, carefully moving closer to the white-robed woman.

“Hello, my lady.” Chen Xiaolian walked until he reached the woman’s back. Then, he did his best to speak up slowly in his most moderate tone.

The woman turned her head around while issuing a lengthy laughter.

She possessed a very beautiful face, seductive even. However, despite the fact that she was laughing, the facial features of her face appeared very stiff and somewhat cold.

“Hello?” Chen Xiaolian waved his hand at her. “Here, can you see me?”

The woman stood still and turned around with her bare feet on the ground. A pair of numb looking eyes regarded Chen Xiaolian.

Chen Xiaolian felt more confident... it would appear that the woman could hear me. We might be able to communicate.

“You should call me Your Majesty. He he he he he he”

The words that were brimming with coldness fell upon Chen Xiaolian’s ears, causing him to become startled!

The woman seemingly tilted her head. Then, she suddenly let out a soft sigh... that sigh apparently carried with it an endless amount of grievances.

She abruptly raised her right hand up to seize her hair. Next, she gently pulled!

Her head was directly pulled out of her neck and she casually held her head in her hands!

Chen Xiaolian could not help but feel a chill running down his spine.

“I ... I know who you are!”

After taking a deep breath, that was what he said.

As for the woman, she burst out with another “he he he he a” sounds of laughter. Then, her body suddenly floated up to disappear into the thick stone walls...

“Phew!” Chen Xiaolian exhaled before taking two steps backward.

“What’s wrong? Xiaolian? Guild Leader?”

Lun Tai and Bei Tai immediately rushed over.

“I am fine, I am fine,” said Chen Xiaolian, who stood firm by leaning against the wall. His eyes shone and he said, “I... just now, I may have encountered a real ghost!”

Chapter 207: Queen Anne

“Encountered a ghost?”

Tian Lie grinned. However, his face was a mask of seriousness as he asked, “What did you see, Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian?”

“... I believe that really is a ghost, a female ghost,” answered Chen Xiaolian who shook his head.

At that moment, the white-robed female ghost re-emerged from the surface of the wall. She floated around the ceiling in a circle before finally descending down to the ground...

She descended onto the left corner of the third floor’s exhibition hall.

There was a display cabinet placed there; placed inside was a row of weapons.

Among the three floors of this White Tower, the third floor was the only one that had weapons!

Those weapons were clearly genuine articles and not imitations.

Mottled with rust, those dark coloured weapons were filled with vestiges of history.

Among them were axes, blades, swords and even bows.

The white-robed female ghost stood beside a row of weapons. She appeared to be quietly staring at one of them.

She had placed her head back onto her neck, making her look less scary.

However, when looking at her from behind, her fluttering white robes and bare foot on the ground gave her a ghastly atmosphere.

“Anne Boleyn.” Chen Xiaolian took several steps forward and whispered those words out.

The female ghost sighed and turned around. Her glazed and numb looking eyes fell upon Chen Xiaolian...

“You should address me as... Your Majesty.”

Chen Xiaolian's scalp tingled and he replied, "... yes, Your Majesty."

"My neck... neck.... hurts so much, hurts so much ... he he he he a ..."

The female ghost continued to laugh with a seemingly blank look on her face.

Her body floated around in a circle once more before descending before the row of display cabinets. Then, she continued to stare at one of the weapons inside.

She attempted to reach out with her seemingly translucent fingers. They penetrated the glass showcase with ease; however, just before she could touch one of the weapons, she suddenly cried out sharply!

Chen Xiaolian could clearly notice a trace of black qi swirling out from one of the weapons inside the showcase!

The white-robed female ghost cried out miserably and her body promptly retreated!

Black qi engulfed her hand and the glazed expression on her face finally revealed an expression of pain.

"Destroy it! Destroy it! He he he he ahh... Help me destroy it!"

The female ghost screamed sharply and her body hastily retreated. Then, she disappeared once more into the stone walls.

"Wait! What did you say?" Chen Xiaolian took two steps forward as he tried to catch up to her.

The others quickly came up behind him and asked, "What happened earlier?"

Chen Xiaolian turned around and looked at Lun Tai and Bei Tai. Then, he looked at Tian Lie and Jean.

"I saw a female ghost. She had brown hair, wore white robes and was barefooted." Chen Xiaolian frowned. "But why am I the only one who can see her?"

Tian Lie narrowed his eyes. "Wait... just now, I think I heard you say... "I

know who you are". What did you mean by that?"

Chen Xiaolian gestured with his head. "The meaning behind those words is simple... I believe I know the female ghost's identity."

"Anne Boleyn. I heard you say that name earlier," said Lun Tai in a low whisper.

"Anne Boleyn?" Bei Tai mumbled.

Chen Xiaolian turned to Tian Lie and asked, "Why, don't you recognize that name?"

Tian Lie wore a calm expression on his face.

"It seems you really are not a Briton, Mr Conan," Chen Xiaolian said slowly.

"Enough of that, my identity is another matter altogether." Tian Lie maintained a relaxed demeanour and said, "What do you know? Just tell us... I mean, we are cooperating to complete this quest, after all."

Chen Xiaolian smiled wryly and asked, "Do you fellows know about the Tudor Dynasty?"

Several of them shook their heads.

It was only the Frenchman, Jean who hesitated before answering, "I think I know a little about it."

"Here on the third floor is a set of big armour... it is very beautiful. This set of armour belonged to a very famous King in the history of the UK, Henry VIII. His era was known throughout history as the Tudor Dynasty."

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian paused and let out a wry smile. "Truth be told, I am not quite knowledgeable about this part of their history. Thankfully, there is a very popular drama series known as 'The Tudors', which tells the story about Henry VIII."

Observing the expression of loss on their faces, Chen Xiaolian sighed. "Oh, all right. Because I liked this series, when I was surfing on the internet, I would go read up some true historical information about Henry VIII."

“How should I put it? This Henry VIII could be considered as a heroic King of England. However, the famous part about him is his... lust and infidelities. Additionally... he was also a devilish and crazy wife killer.”

“Devilish and crazy wife killer?” Lun Tai laughed.

“Indeed, that is not a joke. This King of England had the bad trait of killing his own wives in his resume. Besides... the ones he killed weren’t mere mistresses. Rather... they were... official Queens! Also, he did not only did it once!

“The most famous one among them is the one I mentioned, Anne Boleyn.

“She was the second Queen of Henry VIII.

“Let’s put it this way, Henry VIII was a very unbelievably incredible bastard.

“When he ascended to the throne, he married his own sister-in-law. His first Queen was a princess from Spain.

“Unfortunately, or rather unacceptably, the first Queen had a court maid known as Anne Boleyn. She was an aristocratic lady who entered the palace to be the Queen’s lady-in-waiting.

“In the end, the King took a fancy to her...

“The next part of the story is basically the stereotypical struggle within the palace drama.

“Anne Boleyn and the King came to love one another. Naturally, though, the Queen became unhappy with that. Thus, the two of them waged a war within the palace...

“Let’s put it this way, you fellows have seen ‘Legend of Zhen Huan’, right? [1]”

Chen Xiaolian turned to look at Lun Tai and Bei Tai before letting out a wry smile. “Basically, this Anne Boleyn was a real life Zhen Huan. Only, she was a brutal and vicious Zhen Huan. Her ending was also more miserable compared to Zhen Huan’s.

“Simply put, Henry VIII became obsessed with this British Zhen Huan. In order to marry her, the King made the decision to depose his own Queen.

“However, that was not an easy thing to do because the Queen was not an ordinary person. She was a princess from Spain and her nephew was the King of Spain, who was also the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire at the time.

“Therefore, the actions of Henry VIII to get depose his own wife were met with strong opposition.

“You know, these European royal families are all Catholic. According to the law at the time, the King’s marriage, be it the act of marrying or divorcing, must receive the consent of the Pope. Otherwise, it would be considered invalid.

“Several years passed and Henry VIII’s requests for a divorce were all rejected by the Vatican’s Pope.

“It had to be said, this British Zhen Huan, Anne Boleyn was extremely attractive. She made Henry VIII so obsessed with her that he decided that he must have her as his Queen.

“Thus...

“Henry VIII did something that left a great impact on history.

“You, the Pope refuse to give me a divorce? The law states that a King’s marriage must receive the approval of the Vatican’s Pope?

“Screw your mother! This senior is THE KING! This senior will change the laws!

“Henry VIII did something incredible!

“He ordered, from henceforth, the Church of England will separate from the teachings of Catholicism! It would no longer be subject to the leadership of the Vatican’s Pope!

“He directly split away from the Roman Catholic Church! He had the Church of England set up their own holy teachings. Although they still

believed in God, their relationship with the Vatican's Pope was severed completely.

"Additionally, Henry VIII also announced that in the future, he who was the King of England would become the Supreme Head of the Church of England!

"In other words, he became the Pope of England.

"He did a very, very thorough job.

"After making the announcement, the Bishop of the Church of England would be appointed by him – previously, the appointment would be done by the Vatican's Pope.

"Moreover, at that time, the Vatican's teachings were spread throughout Europe. They possessed lands and assets there, even in England.

"Each year, England would give a church tax to the Vatican Pope.

"Henry VIII had them all... dissolved!

"He appropriated everything that belonged to the Catholic side and sent them into the royal coffers. Furthermore, future church taxes to the Vatican were canceled.

"All of this for one reason, because the King wanted to divorce his wife and marry another woman!

"The impact of this decision is still in effect today... the present Church of England is not subject to Vatican leadership.

"One could even say that this British version of Zhen Huan, this Anne Boleyn had changed this world's history of religion!"

"Holy shit!"

Bei Tai was unable to stop himself from exclaiming out. "This bitch is even more awesome than Zhen Huan ah!"

"However, her ending was also worse off compared to Zhen Huan." Chen Xiaolian said coldly. "This Anne Boleyn was not a good person."

“After Henry VIII separated the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, he named himself as the Supreme Head of England’s religion. He announced the annulment of his marriage with the Queen to marry Anne.

“However, this woman was very powerful.

“After ascending to the position of the Queen, she did many things. The first was to kill off those who had opposed her becoming the Queen.

“Additionally, there was this daughter that Henry VIII had with the previous Queen. Anne saw the daughter as a thorn.

“She had the girl imprisoned for a time before having her abused in the court. She had the princess become a servant. She was simply a real life version of the evil stepmother.

“However, she had a relatively unfortunate ending.

“Henry VIII was a lustful fellow. He had a change of heart after a few years.

“Back then, Anne Boleyn was a lady-in-waiting who seduced the King.

“A few years later... Anne Boleyn also had a lady-in-waiting... that woman did the same thing Anne did back then, seducing the King.

“After the King changed his mind, he decided to annul his marriage with Anne Boleyn.

“However, Anne Boleyn was a very powerful woman. She had colluded with several influential ministers of England. Thus, the King was incapable of simply annulling the marriage. He gave the order to have her executed!

“You fellows might not know this, but this order to kill a Queen was the first in the history of the UK.”

As he spoke, he pointed outside of the walls. “If I am not mistaken... Anne Boleyn, at the lawn that we had just walked past earlier... she was executed at the guillotine platform there. Additionally, she should also have been imprisoned here for a period of time.”

...

—

1 ‘Legend of Zhen Huan’ is a fictional drama series set in the Qing Dynasty. The story revolves around a concubine name Zhen Huan who had to struggle for power within the imperial harem.

Chapter 208: Stealing The King's Property

“There were many speculations and statements regarding the death of Queen Anne in history.

“This Queen Anne, this British Zhen Huan did many things during her time. Without a doubt, she made many enemies. That was especially true when it came to the former Queen whom she had deposed of. The former Queen was the princess of Spain, a figure of power who enjoyed the support of many conservative aristocrats.

“Additionally, Queen Anne had caused England to completely split up from the Vatican. This incident had no doubt become a thorn in the eyes of the Catholic Church's Vatican.

“Back then, she held the affection of the King. However, after she lost the King's affection... many people will want her dead.

“At the end, in the historical records, Queen Anne was declared to have committed a great deal of crimes.

“Those charges include the crime of adultery, incest... and treason.

“All sorts of heavy crimes were pinned upon her. Then, after being imprisoned for a short time, she was executed. Furthermore, it was a brutal execution where she was beheaded.

“A few days after she was beheaded, her husband, King Henry VIII married a new wife... the new wife was that lady-in-waiting of hers.

“This matter was simply karma.”

“When you put it that way... it really does sound like a retribution!”

Lun Tai said in a heavy tone. Then, he turned to look at the display cabinet in the distant. “Just now, what were you looking at there?”

Chen Xiaolian narrowed his eyes and slowly walked forward.

He stood before the row of display cabinets, his eyes staring intently at one of the weapons put on display inside...

“Could it be... it?”

“What is it?” Tian Lie came close in a friendly manner. He turned his attention to the display cabinet. “Guild Leader Chen Xiaolian, what did you say?”

“... about this Queen Anne, there were some interesting legends about her.

“It was said that as she was being held prisoner, she knew that she would be executed. Thus, she made a request.

“Henry VIII agreed to her final request.

“Queen Anne’s request was: She considered herself to be a Queen with high status. Thus, she had no desire to be beheaded by an ordinary blade. Additionally, she said that she was extremely fearful of pain. She requested for a very skilled executioner who will not let her feel pain.

“Therefore, Henry VIII specifically found an executioner from France. This person was a French swordsman and not an executioner.

“The item used for her execution was neither a blade nor an axe. Instead, it was a very sharp sword.

“There was an interesting rumour about this.

“Queen Anne was someone very elegant who exuded an aristocratic atmosphere.

“Before she was executed, she had asked others if the sword that was to be used to kill her was sharp enough.

“Those people informed her that the sword was very sharp.

“Anne then replied, “Very well, I am very satisfied, because I have a very slender neck”. Hmm, something like that. This woman died a very stylish death.”

After saying that, Chen Xiaolian turned his attention to the display cabinet...

“Could it be... this one?”

Within the display cabinet, Chen Xiaolian’s eyes were surprisingly

staring at an ancient and thin looking sword!

The years had left its mark upon it, the blade was mottled with rust and a black lustre gleamed upon its surface. However, at this moment, under such circumstance and atmosphere...

When this sword that was quietly displayed within the showcase was looked upon by everyone there, an eerie colour appeared from it!

It was then...

“He he he he he ah...”

Another burst of soft laughter rang out.

Anne flew out from the walls once more and descended beside Chen Xiaolian... she was standing right beside Tian Lie!

Tian Lie, sensing how Chen Xiaolian's eyes were fixed upon his side, gave a bitter smile and said, “You... don't tell me she is right beside me now.”

“Ah, her hair is almost reaching your shoulder,” Chen Xiaolian coolly said.

Tian Lie took a deep breath... but his face did not reveal an expression of fear. The corners of his mouth twitched as he turned around.

Although he was unable to see Queen Anne, he turned to face the direction that Chen Xiaolian was looking at. Then, he gave a gentle smile and bowed lightly to thin air. Next, he stepped backward and said, “Your Majesty, please.”

This fellow maintained a wide smile on his face as he moved to the side!

Seeing his actions, Chen Xiaolian could not help but roll his eyes.

Then, he waved his hand toward Lun Tai and Bei Tai who had their military knives ready, indicating for them not to act rashly.

Queen Anne stared at the sword within the showcase.

This woman kept staring for a while before slowly extending her hand once more. Her fingers moved past the glass with ease and made contact

with the sword...

A trace of black qi immediately flashed out from the surface of the blade. Anne shrieked out and her body promptly retreated. Black qi was being emitted out from her fingers once more; it was as though some form of power had caused her to become hurt.

This time, despite not being able to see Anne's figure, the others, including Tian Lie, Lun Tai and Bei Tai were able to clearly see the trace amount of black qi!

The black qi swirled about at a spot not too far away from Chen Xiaolian... that was where Queen Anne's fingers were!

Chen Xiaolian observed Queen Anne silently. Then, he suddenly spoke up.

"Your Majesty," said Chen Xiaolian in a heavy tone. "Do you want to take out this sword? If so... do you require my assistance?"

Anne suddenly turned around!

Her pair of eyes had appeared empty. However, in that one instant, her eyes flashed and she stared into Chen Xiaolian's eyes!

... .. although it was only a moment, the sharpness within her eyes quickly dissipated and returned to the former empty state.

"He he he he he he..." Anne appeared to have heard Chen Xiaolian's words. With a mad smile on her face, she nodded her head. "I, I want to destroy it, destroy it... he he he he, my neck hurts so much, hurts so much... he he he he... destroy it..."

This female ghost clearly possessed consciousness. However, perhaps due to the fact that she was a ghost with a spirit body, her consciousness was hazy and incomplete.

Yet, Chen Xiaolian's words had clearly attracted her attention.

"Very well... he he ah... help me destroy it... he he he he... help me, help me..."

Hearing Queen Anne's words, Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered and he

suddenly said, “I can help you accomplish that. However... what benefit could I get for doing that?”

Anne regarded Chen Xiaolian with a seemingly foolish looking expression. Then, she spoke up.

“He he ah... here, all the treasure here... he he ah... all can... can be taken... he he he he...”

Treasures?

Although all the armours and weapons placed on display here were very valuable and were antiques, Chen Xiaolian had no interest them.

“No no no... these things are too common. I have no interest in these things. The weapons and armours here are too ordinary,” replied Chen Xiaolian who deliberately shook his head.

Anne fell silent.

She then ignored Chen Xiaolian. Once again, she moved toward the display cabinet and extended her hand once more to try and touch the sword.

Once again, the previous incident repeated itself.

Anne shrieked out and retreated.

The pain seemingly brought a brief sense of awareness back to her.

She turned and looked at Chen Xiaolian.

“Destroy it, help me destroy it... ... you have no interest in these ordinary goods... ... I can take you to find a good sword... ... a very good sword... ... it is a real treasure... ... he he he he...”

Hearing that, Chen Xiaolian’s body trembled!

Find a good sword?!

She... she really is an important storyline character!

“Tell me, how do I destroy it?”

Chen Xiaolian’s instinct told him that this was not a simple matter... if

he merely had to take out the sword from the display cabinet and break it on the spot... .. that seemed too easy.

As expected!

“Take it... to the guillotine... .. destroy it! Destroy it! He he he he he he...”

She burst into another string of lengthy goose bumps inducing laughter. However, Chen Xiaolian had understood what needed to be done.

Take the sword out, bring it to the guillotine platform and destroy it...

En, the guillotine platform is the place outside, the lawn!

Chen Xiaolian's eyes flickered and he took a deep breath.

He was convinced that he had found an important clue for this quest!

Chen Xiaolian raised Fearless War Axe in his hand and cleaved down on the display cabinet!

Although the glass of the display cabinet was made of enhanced, anti-theft glass, under the might of the Fearless War Axe, the display cabinet was easily cleaved apart!

Chen Xiaolian extended out one hand and reached into the display cabinet to grab hold of the black coloured ancient long sword...

In that moment, however, Chen Xiaolian felt a tremor running through his body!

A strange and special feeling surged out from his heart!

The instant his fingers made contact with the long sword, he felt as though a formless flow of qi and sound ripple had instantly spread out in all directions. They then disappeared into the walls!

At that moment, if one were to observe the Tower of London from the sky, they would notice a mass of formless, black coloured ripple. The ripple spread out in a circular fashion, enveloping all of the Tower of London!

Caw caw! Caw caw!

The ravens circling the sky were seemingly shocked by something. They cawed out loudly before rapidly flying away from the Tower of London.

...

“It seems like... something happened?” Chen Xiaolian held onto the sword with his hand. Then, he turned around to look at the others.

At the same time, Chen Xiaolian swept his gaze around the floor and his face sank!

Behind Lun Tai and Bei Tai...

Two sets of knight armour standing on display in the exhibition hall area suddenly moved!

Resembling two steel puppets, the two set of armours instantly howled out. They lifted the poleaxe in their arms and descended savagely upon Lun Tai and Bei Tai!

At the same time, on the third floor of the exhibition hall, at the side area near the walls and the corners... the various sets of warrior armour came to ‘life’!

“Ka ka” sounds groaned out as their bodies twisted into action and they issued out a chilling howl. Together, they charged toward Chen Xiaolian.

“Stealing the King’s property! Punishment, death!”

A knight armour set uttered a furious roar and raised the long sword in its hand. A black coloured flaming qi burst out from the surface of the sword!

Within the third floor, over ten sets of armour came to life!

Lun Tai and Bei Tai quickly separated. The two armour monsters behind them raised their poleaxe and slashed down with it.

Lun Tai brandished his military knife and forcefully deflected the poleaxe. He howled loudly and quickly retreated.

Bei Tai retreated again and again as he shouted, “Son of a bitch! I knew it won’t be so easy!”

Chen Xiaolian had already charged forward. Fearless War Axe in his hand was raised before being sent cleaving downward upon the head of one of the armour sets.

With a crash, the armour set fell apart and became scattered upon the floor. However, the black coloured qi swirled around and a formless power seemingly pieced them back together one by one!

Chen Xiaolian swore, "Damn it! It can even automatically restore itself?"

"Let's get out of here!"

Tian Lie shouted and lashed out a kick at an armour set beside him, kicking it down.

Then, an earth-shattering roar echoed out!

Chen Xiaolian turned around and his face became extremely ugly to behold.

In the central area of the third floor's exhibition area, the dragon statue with a height of around seven to eight metres...

Came to life!

A gigantic red-eyed dragon whose mouth was emitting black coloured flaming qi turned toward Chen Xiaolian and the others. It stared down at them with a terrifyingly crimson pair of eyes. Then, it opened its mouth and shouted furiously!

"Stealing the King's property! Punishment, DEATH!"

Chapter 209: Fearless Roar

That was a dragon!

A real life Western Dragon!

No, to be precise, although it had come to life, its body remained metallic in structure – that would only cause it to become a greater threat!

Following a strong gust of wind, the gigantic dragon pounced forward. It spread open both its wings, revealing its pair of claws upon the skeletal structure of its wings. The flapping of its wings resulted in a tempest of wind within the exhibition hall! Countless display cabinets were crushed and the shattered glass fragments flew about everywhere.

Chen Xiaolian propped up a shield before him. Glancing around, he saw both Lun Tai and Bei Tai on the ground; they hastily rolled themselves to the corners.

“Damn it, hurry up and dodge!”

The gigantic dragon’s tail whipped out. Thankfully, Lun Tai’s reaction was fast and he shoved Bei Tai’s head down. With a “boom”, the dragon’s tail smashed into the surface of the wall! A loud noise reverberated out of the thick wall and fragments of stones flew out!

Chen Xiaolian had barely recollected himself before a knight armour set descended upon him. Its poleaxe slashed down and all Chen Xiaolian could do was use the explosive-proof shield to block it. The massive strength behind the attack caused cracking sounds to emerge from the explosive-proof shield. As for Chen Xiaolian, he was forced to take a step backward.

However, that did not cause him to hesitate. He gripped Fearless War Axe in his hand and lashed out with a backhanded attack. With a “clang”, his axe attack caused the knight armour set’s helmet to cave in and the armour set to split apart on the ground. Chen Xiaolian quickly strode past it and shouted to Lun Tai and Bei Tai, “Hurry up and leave this place!”

The gigantic dragon set its sight upon Chen Xiaolian and its huge body shot forward!

Thankfully, they were indoors. Despite spreading out its wings, the gigantic dragon was unable to fly up – due to insufficient space; it could not make full use of its wings.

Even so, the gigantic dragon's body was able to easily crush a portion of the display cabinets. If not for Chen Xiaolian dodging quickly, he would have been stamped down by it!

Hearing Chen Xiaolian's words, Lun Tai and Bei Tai who were in the corner simply jumped up toward the wall as they attempted to jump down through the windows... although this was a tall three-storey tower, for these enhanced Awakened ones, such a feat was not a big deal.

However, right as Lun Tai and Bei Tai jumped out through the window; the gigantic dragon's tail swept viciously and struck the window. The impact caused the window to break apart.

“Lun Tai!”

Chen Xiaolian shouted loudly. Fortunately, he then heard Lun Tai replying to him from the outside.

“We're fine! We're not dead yet!”

Outside the tower, Lun Tai had one hand hanging onto the bottom part of the collapsed window. He held on tightly onto the hole in the wall while Bei Tai, who was at the bottom, reached the window of the second floor. Then, Lun Tai jumped down and Bei Tai caught him.

Within the exhibition hall, Chen Xiaolian appeared to have been targeted by the gigantic dragon and was forced into a corner... although there was a window right above his position, with the dragon standing right before him, any attempt to jump up would be the equivalent of him seeking death.

Summon Garfield?

Considering how big this thing is, Garfield is probably no match for it.

As Chen Xiaolian was hesitating, the gigantic dragon's pair of crimson eyes suddenly stared at Chen Xiaolian and it opened up its mouth!

Chen Xiaolian's heart shouted out in warning. He subconsciously jumped to the left side. At the same time, he did not forget to grab the deformed explosive-proof shield to defend his body...

BOOM!

A black coloured flaming qi sprayed out from its mouth! The collapsed display cabinets at the corner were instantly pulverized by the flaming qi!

Chen Xiaolian had already thrown himself out of the way. However, the edges of the black flaming qi grazed past him and he felt as though a heavy hammer was battering his entire body. It nearly caused him to cough out blood. After landing, he rolled his body away vigorously.

The explosive-proof shield in his hand was utterly shattered, leaving only the handle that he was still gripping onto.

Chen Xiaolian quickly tossed away the handle.

At that moment, he heard Tian Lie's voice coming over from the other direction.

"Here! Hurry! Use the stairs!"

Tian Lie was standing at the entryway of the stairs leading to the second floor. Several warrior armour sets lay broken apart on the ground beside him while the Frenchman, Jean stood behind him.

Chen Xiaolian dared not hesitate. Taking advantage of the fact that the dragon had yet to turn around, he jumped and ran madly forward.

A "boom" resounded as the dragon's tail swept out once more. Chen Xiaolian bent his body down right on time and the dragon's tail, which resembled a descending hammer slid past his head.

With a sprint, Chen Xiaolian reached the stairs entryway, nearly slamming Tian Lie down the stairs in the process.

"Run!"

Chen Xiaolian shouted and the three of them quickly ran down the flight of stairs.

The gigantic dragon turned over and caught up to them. However, the stairs was too narrow for it. After rushing to the entryway of the stairs, the gigantic dragon's body became stuck within the stairs corridor. However, it extended its long neck and its jaws clamped down...

“Ah ah ah ah!!!”

A miserable scream rang out!

The unfortunate Frenchman, Jean was in the last place. The dragon bit down on his shoulder and dragged him backward!

Blood sprayed out!

Chen Xiaolian turned his head back and saw the gigantic dragon pulling the Frenchman's body back. It rapidly threw him up and caught him with its mouth...

Kacha!

The Frenchman's body was split into two!

This scene was simply too cruel!

Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate. He understood that trying to duke it out with this monster was a foolish thing to do and he continued to run down as fast as he could.

The gigantic dragon's body was stuck within the stairs' corridor and it struggled with all its might, slamming everything and causing the entire tower to shake lightly!

Thankfully, this Norman-styled building had traditionally solid stone walls. For the moment, it would appear that the dragon was unable to break its way out.

However, the situation within the second floor was no walk in the park!

The various ancient warrior armour sets standing on display everywhere in the second floor had come to life.

The moment Chen Xiaolian and Tian Lie charged down into the second floor, they were greeted with the sight of over twenty warrior armour sets within the exhibition hall. The armour sets charged over!

“Bloody Hell! They all came to life!” Chen Xiaolian swore loudly.

Tian Lie simply whispered, “Charge down!”

Chen Xiaolian was quick to reply, “Do we have any other choice? Forward! They don’t have any weapons! Break through them!”

The silver lining here was that all the equipment placed on display in the exhibition hall of the first and second floor were armour sets. However, only the armour sets were displayed and not the weapons... only the third floor had weapons displayed.

That was a huge stroke of fortune for Chen Xiaolian and the others.

Chen Xiaolian was the first to charge out. He brandished his Fearless War Axe to open a path. As an [A] class weapon, Fearless War Axe’s sharpness needed no illustration.

However, in face of over twenty metal warrior armour sets that resembled twenty iron barrels, Chen Xiaolian was in for a tough battle!

Although the armour sets were without weapons, Chen Xiaolian was surrounded by the over twenty iron barrels and could sense their arms reaching toward him from all directions in an attempt to restrain him. He slashed out several times with his axe and brought down two armour sets before him. However, they then restrained him.

Chen Xiaolian did not hesitate. He promptly took a deep breath and unleashed a furious roar!

The skill that came with Fearless War Axe, Fearless Roar activated!

For fifteen seconds, cleaving effects will be increased by 50%!

Chen Xiaolian’s strength was only at [B+] class. After activating this skill, his strength became infinitely close to [A-] class!

An enhancement of one class in strength was very noticeable. Chen Xiaolian madly displayed out the Demon King of Confusion’s axe skills

and hacked all the way. After a few seconds, he broke out of the encirclement. Seven to eight fragmented armour sets lay upon the ground.

Tian Lie appeared to be very cunning. He followed closely behind Chen Xiaolian and let him assume the vanguard position to clear the way. When Chen Xiaolian arrived at the entryway to the second floor, he saw that Tian Lie was right behind him. He appeared quite relaxed.

Chen Xiaolian had no time to say anything and the two of them quickly sprinted down the stairs.

In the exhibition hall of the first floor, a group of warrior armour sets had also come to life. After Chen Xiaolian and Tian Lie rushed down the stairs, those iron barrels surged toward them...

"I really hate these iron barrels!" Chen Xiaolian clenched his teeth and brandished his war axe as he strode forward...he dared not cause any delays as the Fearless Roar skill would only last for fifteen seconds!

The difficulty of the first floor appeared higher... because a group of metal warhorses had also charged forward!

The iron barrels rode upon the horses as they charged. One with the horse, they unleashed an extremely powerful force! Chen Xiaolian attempted to take one head one and jumped up. Fearless War Axe descended and one of the iron barrels split apart even as it became unseated from the horse!

However, the resulting counter force caused the pulcrue of his hands to feel pain. He also spat out blood from his mouth!

Although his strength had been enhanced up to [A-] class, his Physique remained in [B+] class!

His body's ability to take damage was insufficient!

"Xiaolian! Here!"

At that moment, the doors to the corridor that was connected to the exhibition hall on the first floor were flung open. Lun Tai, who had jumped down to the first floor from the outside, charged inside. He held

onto a rifle in his hand; raising his hands, he fired at one of the iron armour sets!

Having removed the obstacles within the corridor, Chen Xiaolian rapidly rushed over. Tian Lie who was behind him, moved at a fairly rapid pace and he followed Chen Xiaolian as he ran forward.

Lun Tai was kneeling on the floor as the rifle in his hands fired out continuously, breaking apart the iron barrels on both sides. After Chen Xiaolian and Tian Lie had run out past him, he quickly retreated.

The doors of the corridor were rapidly closed shut. Bei Tai was waiting outside.

Bei Tai was quick to step forward. He stabbed the military knife he held in his hand into the bolt of the doors!

The doors were made of metal. After the durable military knife was stabbed into the bolt of the doors...

Banging sounds could be heard coming from the other side as the iron barrels frantically slammed onto the doors. Yet, it appeared that they were unable to break through any time soon.

“Hurry! This door won’t hold them for long.” Lun Tai exhaled.

The four of them quickly ran toward the lawn located on the left side of the White Tower.

Upon the lawn was the ruins of the ancient guillotine platform.

“Here it is!”

Chen Xiaolian jumped up onto the guillotine platform and pulled out the dark coloured long sword acquired from the exhibition hall on the third floor.

“What do we do?” Lun Tai asked.

“Just destroy it!” Chen Xiaolian threw the sword down the ground, raised Fearless War Axe up high and cleaved down with it!

Keng!!!

Credits

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